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ABSTRACT

Proceedings of a 1988 statewide symposium on school restructuring in Nebraska are presented in this document. Part 1 contains the opening remarks made concerning Nebraska education and the status of school restructuring. Part 2 presents the addresses of three nationally recognized experts on national school restructuring perspectives. A panel of six Nebraska educators describes school restructuring practices in the state in part 3. Discussion group facilitator reports are offered in the fourth part. Part 5 contains reviews by the national experts, which include recommendations for and strategies of implementation. Closing remarks made by a state senator conclude the final part. Lists of the featured faculty and participants are included. (LMI)

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A NEBRASKA SYMPOSIUM ON SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING DECEMBER 13, 1988

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A NEBRASKA SYMPOSIUM ON SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

SPONSORED BY
THE LEGISLATURE'S EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

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NEBRASKA
SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING SYMPOSIUM

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NEBRASKA SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING SYMPOSIUM

PREFACE

For nearly a decade now, education has occupied a central place on state policy agendas. Since the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983, the states have undertaken a nearly unprecedented number of education reforms. But despite important strides made in educational reform in recent years, much remains to be done. Indeed, according to a broad range of educators, policymakers, business people, and community leaders, the challenges facing our education system today are fundamentally different and greater than they were just a few short years ago. Increasingly, people are recognizing that nothing short of a fundamental restructuring of our educational system will suffice if our youth are to successfully navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Responding to this challenge, the 1988 Nebraska Legislature adopted Legislative Resolution 391. LR 391 called upon the Education Committee to undertake a study of "school restructuring," now commonly associated with the "second wave" of education reform in the United States. Completed in November 1988, the staff report examined the school restructuring movement, its impetus, and guiding principles. The staff report also recommended a "Talking With Educators" project designed to provide policymakers and educators with an opportunity to explore the concepts and principles of school restructuring, and to provide local educators, who so choose, an opportunity to act upon the notion of restructuring. (The staff recommendation is modeled after the "Talking With Teachers" project designed by the Education Commission of the States.)

In conjunction with the staff report, the Education Committee decided to begin a dialogue on school restructuring in Nebraska by holding a School Restructuring Symposium. The Symposium was held in Lincoln, Nebraska, on December 13, 1988, at

the Center for Continuing Education on the East Campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Educators from across the state were invited; they were encouraged to bring "teams" -- teachers, administrators, community leaders -- to the Symposium. Over 300 teachers, administrators, policymakers, and community leaders participated.

The Symposium proved to be an enormous success. Participants explored the need for education reform, the nature and promise of the restructuring movement, and the practical measures necessary to accomplish it. It was a day when a shared commitment to the future of Nebraska's education system allowed participants to transcend the usual differences and disagreements and make significant improvement a dream that can come true. Participants heard presentations from three nationally-recognized experts on school restructuring, learned about restructuring efforts already underway in Nebraska from a panel of Nebraska educators, and examined restructuring in small group work sessions.

A number of people contributed mightily to the success of the Symposium. First and foremost, I want to thank the 300 educators who took time out of their schedules to attend and participate in the Symposium, and the school officials who made it possible for them to attend. Devoting time and energy to talking about education reform without the need for a specific outcome is important. And in that endeavor, the Symposium benefited enormously from the presentations of three national education experts -- Michael Cohen, Associate Director of Education Programs for the National Governors' Association, Dr. Robert McCarthy, Director of Schools for the Coalition of Essential Schools, and Dr. Beverly Anderson, Associate Executive Director of the Education Commission of the States -- and from the presentations of six Nebraska educators -- James Merritt, Superintendent of the Norfolk Public Schools, Sandy Seckel, a teacher in the Columbus Public Schools, Father James E. Gilg, Principal of Father Flanagan High School in Omaha, Jan Herbek, a teacher in the Doniphan Elementary School, Gail Thompson, Principal of Doniphan Elementary School, and Larry Ramaekers,

Superintendent of Sandy Creek School District -- who shared with us their school restructuring efforts. I also want to acknowledge and thank the nine individuals who served as small group discussion leaders: Bill Callahan, Dan Kamas, Milan Wall, Miles Bryant, Bob Beecham, Robin Kimbrough, John Clark, Larry Scherer, and Tim Kemper. They facilitated, without reigning in or controlling, some of the most lively discussions I've witnessed.

The Symposium was sponsored by the Legislature's Education Committee, the State Department of Education, and the Nebraska Center for Excellence in Education (NCEE). Their encouragement and enthusiasm for beginning a dialogue on school restructuring in Nebraska is most appreciated. Along with NCEE, the preparation for and conduct of the Symposium fell to the staff of the Legislative Research Division (LRD), who once again demonstrated the kind of excellence my colleagues and I have come to expect from them. Specifically, I want to thank the following legislative staff: Dick Hargesheimer, Karen Van Laningham, and Linda Soto of the LRD; Larry Scherer, LaRue Wunderlich, and Dawn Rockey-Egenberger of the Legislature's Education Committee. Dawn Rockey-Egenberger and Ron Bowmaster, a former mainstay of the LRD, put together the participant evaluation of the Symposium, which is noted below. Without the efforts of these staff, and many others, the Symposium would not have been the success it was.

In one form or another, school restructuring is underway in Nebraska. As we learned during the Symposium, many schools in the state are actively engaged in one or more aspects of restructuring. And, I'm pleased to report that enthusiasm for fundamental reform has remained high since the Symposium.

Post-symposium activities indicate a strong, continuing interest in school restructuring among Nebraska educators. In February 1989, two months after the Symposium, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire assessing the Symposium. Nearly 50 percent of the attendees responded. Of those who responded,

61 percent said that the presentations of the national experts were "very helpful" in clarifying the sometimes elusive notion of school restructuring; another 38 percent found the presentations helpful, while only one respondent said the presentations were not helpful at all. Over 83 percent of the respondents said that they believe that the long-term effect on education of restructuring would be substantial or significant. Seventy-nine percent indicated a strong interest in pursuing school restructuring, while 57 percent said that restructuring activities are now being undertaken in their school or school district. In response to a list of possible barriers to school restructuring, 55 percent cited funding and a fear of change, while only 12 percent cited rules and regulations.

In May 1989, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 336, the Nebraska Model School Restructuring Act. LB 336 would have established local "Talking With Educators" forums to explore restructuring further, would have provided incentive grants for schools undertaking restructuring, and would have provided for the waiver of rules and regulations perceived as barriers to restructuring. While the Governor applauded the purpose and intent of the bill, and lent her support to the need for fundamental educational reform, she vetoed LB 336 on the basis of its funding provisions. A similar measure, LB 960, was passed by the Legislature in 1990 and approved by the Governor on April 7, 1990. LB 960 puts the Legislature on record in support of school restructuring and encourages local school restructuring efforts.

Recently, too, the Nebraska Center for Excellence in Education announced a ten-year effort -- **A Decade of Change: Preparing Nebraska Students for the 21st Century** -- to encourage fundamental educational reform at the grassroots level. **A Decade of Change** is a joint undertaking, involving a variety of educators and including a number of specific activities. Anyone wanting more information is encouraged to write to: Milan Wall, Nebraska Center for Excellence in Education, 941 O Street, Suite 920, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68502.

The signs of progress and commitment to school restructuring in Nebraska are encouraging. It is my desire that these **Proceedings** contribute to continuing conversations about school restructuring across the state.

These **Proceedings** are an edited version of the transcripts of the December 13, 1988, School Restructuring Symposium. Wayne Wasserman, a former visiting professor of Philosophy at UNL, Brent Toalson, a former staff assistant with the LRD, and Dick Hargesheimer ably edited the **Proceedings**. Nancy Cherrington, Linda Soto, and Karen Van Laningham, of the LRD, performed yeoperson work in formatting and publishing it. Martha Carter, of the LRD, reviewed the final draft, clarifying certain ambiguities. Those who revisit the Symposium in these pages will, I am convinced, find their efforts rewarding.

State Senator Ron Withem, Chair

Education Committee

October 1990

PART ONE - OPENING REMARKS

NEBRASKA AND THE SECOND WAVE OF EDUCATION REFORM

By

Senator Ron Withem

Withem of Papillion is Chair of the Legislature's Education Committee.

Many of the components of the restructuring movement have been on educators' agendas for a long, long time, but educational restructuring is an issue that is just beginning to find its way to state public policymakers. Last spring we introduced a study resolution, LR 391, asking the Legislature to look at restructuring. Coupled with that we have been having a dialogue with the state's education commissioner about a "Talking With Educators" program. My role here today is to kick off the program, to attempt to get things started, and to give you a little of my perspective on restructuring.

I guess the first question that might be asked is, "Why should we in Nebraska be looking at restructuring education?" My answer to that question is influenced by how I viewed my role as a teacher. Most of you who know of my background know that I taught American Government at Papillion High School. At that time I was confident that I was doing an adequate job of educating young people. I worked hard at my job. I felt that the students in my class enjoyed it, and I felt that they were getting good information from my class. I cared about my students. I also attempted whenever possible to be a facilitator of learning, planning activities that brought about active learning as opposed to passive learning. I did not do a lot of lecturing. I did not require a lot of memorization. I felt comfortable that I was a good teacher. But at the same time I never left a classroom, a day of school, or a year of teaching school feeling that I was doing a good enough job. I always felt that there were some students in my classroom

I was unable to reach, students who had not gained from the classroom experience. Furthermore, too often I found myself using methods of teaching that were easy to plan and easy to execute, even though I knew that they were not the best methods of teaching. So at times I would leave a classroom questioning whether the information I had been teaching that particular class was meaningful for my students. When kids left my classroom I would have this gnawing little feeling in my stomach that maybe their time had not been spent as well as it could have been.

I think we as a state need a similar perspective when we think about the way we educate young people. First of all, we need to acknowledge the fact that we have a very professional group of teachers in our state, a very professional group of administrators, and a very caring, dedicated group of school board members who are spending their time without compensation, doing a good job of setting education policy at the local level. We should be justifiably proud of our schools. By most indicators that are available we should feel comfortable that compared to other states we are doing a good job. But at the same time I think we as a state need to realize that no matter how good a job we now may be doing, it is not good enough. It is not good enough to meet the needs of the young people who are coming to our schools, young people who are going to be living in the next century, attempting to earn an income, and providing the leadership that this nation will need. It is not really good enough for us to feel that we compare well to other states because the entire educational system of the United States has some very serious deficiencies. It is not good enough when we are losing the international competitive war with other nations. It is not good enough that we feel comfortable that we are educating a majority of our students well when whichever indicators you use tell us that from 10 to 25 percent of our young people are probably at risk. So we are not meeting the needs of students as we should, and restructuring is a part of the movement to improve education so that it meets their needs.

I think that in Nebraska we need a much greater sense of urgency about improving education than we have seen so far. We seem to be very comfortable in Nebraska as policymakers, as educators, as those in the education group attempting to influence public policy. But that sense of comfort allows us to continue to fight the battles that divided our state in the past and not to get on to the agenda of how we can actually improve education. Restructuring is part of that sense of national urgency.

In Nebraska we did go through some reform. We are not terribly proud of those accomplishments. We passed an excellent piece of legislation a few years ago, LB 994, but it was not funded. We now need to move beyond that kind of educational reform, which is sometimes referred to as the first wave of educational reform, and start talking about those things that will make an impact on young people as they enter our classrooms.

SUMMARY OF THE STAFF REPORT ON LR 391

By

Dick Hargesheimer

Hargesheimer is Director of the Nebraska Legislative Council's Legislative Research Division.

I will briefly summarize the staff report on LR 391, a resolution adopted during the last legislative session. The report, Restructuring Schools: The Second Wave of Education Reform, reflects the views of the staff and not necessarily the views of the Education Committee. To prevent any confusion, I would also like to point out right at the start that school restructuring is not about school consolidation.

The major conclusion of the staff report is that, far more than in the past, improvements in education must be continuous and ongoing if Nebraska and the United States are to remain competitive in the global marketplace. In today's economy rapid change is the norm; flexibility, not stability, is the key to success. The old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," is no longer a reliable guide to the way we do things. Now we must constantly challenge ourselves to do better.

During the first wave of the most recent tide in education reform, debate was largely centered in government and media circles. While many educators were involved, their participation was largely confined to reacting to proposals put forth by others. Not surprisingly, the first wave of reform brought a deluge of proposals for more: more standards, more regulations, more money, more courses, more time spent in school, more homework, and so forth. In other words, legislators responded to the crisis in education by doing what from their perspective and orientation they knew how to do best. So they added more of this and more of that to the traditional educational system. What legislators did not alter was the structure of education, a structure that

was designed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and remains largely intact today.

But the Legislature's adoption of LR 391 invites us to consider more profound change; it carries us beyond the first wave of reform and into the second. This second wave of reform, now coming to be called restructuring, aims at fundamentally changing the structure of education. The restructuring movement is based on solid research on how students best learn and teachers best teach, and this movement is driven in part by a recognition that the scaffolding of American education mirrors yesterday's economy and that the present structure of American education is not in alignment with the challenges and opportunities facing tomorrow's students. Restructuring is not about school consolidation. It is not necessarily a new idea, and there is no single cookbook model to restructure schools that could be prepared for every educational appetite. Restructuring is made up of many recipes of shared principles, visions, and strategies.

The first wave of reform largely involved legislators mandating more of this and more of that from the top down, with or without funding. The second wave, the restructuring movement, is distinguishable because it is being led by educators themselves. One might even generally characterize the restructuring movement as the view that if experienced educators were allowed to design their own schools from scratch, the schools would look fundamentally different from how they do today. Even if all kids came to school loved and well-nourished, and clearly they do not, experienced educators left to their own devices would want to teach them differently from the way we do in most places today.

At the end of the report the staff proposes one way that Nebraska schools and communities could further explore the notion of restructuring. The proposal calls for a year-long "Talking With Educators" project. This would involve a series of forums, both local and statewide, where teachers, superintendents, principals, board members, parents, and students come together to explore the whole notion of restructuring. The

proposal is not driven by any particular model or agenda for restructuring; instead, it is intended to stimulate discussion on the part of those educators and communities who want to implement changes in their educational structures. This project proposal by the staff is simply one of any number of proposals or options that the Education Committee might want to explore.

PART TWO

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

RESTRUCTURING: WHY IT'S NEEDED AND WHAT IT IS

By

Michael Cohen

Cohen is the Associate Director of Education Programs for the National Governors' Association.

Senator Withem introduced me and will introduce my colleagues as "national experts." When he did that it reminded me of a definition of an expert I had heard before. It goes something like this: "Experts are people who are more than 50 miles from home, have no responsibility for implementing what they recommend, and show slides." I don't show slides, so I guess I meet two out of those three criteria. I will let you judge just how much expertise my colleagues and I have.

My job this morning is to begin a discussion about school restructuring. In particular I will try to provide you with the big picture, a national perspective from a policy level on what restructuring is about. I will address two broad questions. First, why should anybody be interested in restructuring schools? And, second, what does restructuring mean anyway? What structures might we want to change? After all, "restructuring" is probably the most rapidly growing buzz word in American education these days, and we have a history in American education of periodically adopting new buzz words. We do not necessarily change anything that we do, but we have used new language every couple of years to describe what were doing or were are about to do.

I hope we can move beyond empty buzz words, and I hope that by the end of the day we will all be a bit more clear about what restructuring means, or might mean, or might come to mean in Nebraska.

Why Restructuring?

As Senator Withem pointed out, Nebraska already has a pretty good education system. People are generally satisfied with the schools, and by most national indicators Nebraska looks pretty good compared to other states. You have an 86 percent graduation rate, placing you among the highest in the country. You have a relatively small proportion of minority students and have been able to avoid many of the problems that states and localities have with large concentrations of foreign and minority students. A recent teacher survey suggests that 86 percent of the teachers in Nebraska seem to be pretty satisfied with the way things are going for them. They would like a little bit more pay, but overall they seem to be quite satisfied with things.

These data put you higher than most other states in the country, and you do not get a sense that there is a tremendous groundswell for dramatic education reform in this state. But restructuring very clearly is dramatic reform. So if things seem to be going so well and if Nebraska is doing so well compared to other states, why should this be a topic of conversation? Why is this topic worth consideration?

In response to such questions I would argue that the reason restructuring is worth considering is that we have to get the right frame of reference when we judge how well our schools are doing. As Senator Withem suggested, the real question before us is not how well we are doing in comparison with other states or how well we are doing in comparison with the past. The real question is how well our schools are doing in comparison with what we need them to do to educate our kids for the future. And by that standard I think you will agree with me that neither in Nebraska nor anywhere else in the country are the schools doing all that we need them to do for the future. When

you look at that standard of comparison, then you begin to sense a need for large-scale changes in the way the education system operates.

The Demands Of A Changing World

Let me try to lay out that argument in greater detail and thereby attempt to answer the question, "Why should we restructure our schools?" What is the challenge facing the education system, the challenge to which restructuring is an answer?

Think about it this way. There have been a variety of sweeping changes in the demographics of our society, in the nature of our economy, in the nature of the global economy, and in the nature of the technology that is used in our production and in all forms of work. Because of these changes we are seeing a growing mismatch between the knowledge and skills demanded in the workplace and the knowledge and skills of the entering work force. More particularly, workers at all levels are going to need what we in education often call higher-order thinking skills. They will need to be able to communicate complex ideas, to analyze and solve complex problems, to identify order and find direction in ambiguous and uncertain environments, to invent workable solutions to non-routine and non-recurring problems, and to think and reason abstractly. They will need to be able to do all those things not in isolation from their co-workers, colleagues, and peers but in collaboration with them.

If you look at how workplaces are moving into the future, you begin to see a demand for all those kinds of skills. For example, the nature of the insurance industry has changed so much that the requirements for the front line workers are much more complicated than they used to be. You also see these changes in factories at GM and other auto manufacturing firms. You certainly see it in the high tech firms. These are the kinds of knowledge and skills that are increasingly demanded of people at all levels in the workplace.

How Well Are We Currently Doing?

If that is what we need from people leaving the education system, then how well are we currently doing? If you look at the available data, I would argue the answer is not very well at all. The best national data we have on what students know and are able to do comes from the National Assessment of Education Progress. For 20 years NAEP has been testing 17-year-olds. When you look at their data it becomes very clear. Only between 5 and 15 percent of the 17-year-olds that are tested in almost any year can demonstrate that they have acquired the kinds of knowledge and higher-order skills that I referred to before. These tests are not terribly difficult. For example, only 5 to 15 percent of the students are able to use a train schedule to figure out how to get from Philadelphia to Washington at a certain time, how to write a one- or two-paragraph letter to their principal identifying a problem that they think needs to be addressed, or how to write a letter to an employer indicating why they ought to be considered for a job. These are not enormously difficult tasks, but the percentage able to do them is relatively small. At the other end of the continuum we have a national dropout rate somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 to 25 percent. In urban areas that figure is upwards of 40 percent. So there is now a big gap between the performance that we need from the system and the current performance of the system.

Furthermore, the gap between what we need and what we get is likely to get worse rather than better if we do not find some way to address it. The reason for this is that the school age population is increasingly going to be made up of students from poor families, from minority families, from single-parent families, from teen-parent families, from families with a history of involvement in substance abuse, and so on. All of those are demographic markers of students who are at risk of dropping out or at risk of other forms of academic failure.

The Fundamental Challenge

The fundamental challenge facing the education system, then, is to find ways of teaching higher-order skills to students who are currently at risk of dropping out. We need to have the students with whom we now do the worst succeed, complete their education, and leave looking like the elite of the system currently do. That is what society is going to demand from schools as we approach the twenty-first century. In that context the call for restructuring the education system arises because nobody thinks that we can close a gap that big and that important by continuing to tinker with the way the system currently operates. Simply lengthening the school year for a few more days or weeks, having kids do another 20 minutes of homework each night, testing them more often, and evaluating teachers more often are not likely to help us close the gap between where we are and where we need to be.

The Carnegie Report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers of the Twenty-first Century, and our own report from the National Governors' Association, Time for Results, both came out in 1986 and both advance a policy agenda for restructuring the American education system. For similar reasons this past summer the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association both endorsed the idea of school restructuring and started their own initiatives within their own organizations. When the governors, the business community, and both teachers organizations in this country are singing out of the same songbook, it is probably a tune at least worth listening to.

What Does Restructuring Mean?

If we have an argument for why we should restructure, what structures should we change? What does restructuring mean? First of all, restructuring involves comprehensive and system-wide changes in education. We are not, in fact, talking about restructuring schools. We are really talking about restructuring the entire education system. This means that we are going to need to look for ways to change the behavior and operation of local school districts and of the state education policy

apparatus at the same time, because you cannot change schools and have the rest of the system operate the way it does. Everybody has got to change in sync and that makes it a comprehensive and complicated agenda.

Second, many of you will recognize that the specific ideas about changes in educational practice that we will be talking about are not necessarily new. Many of you will be sitting there saying, "Oh yeah, we did that before, we tried that 10 years ago." But keep a couple of things in mind when you have that reaction. There is nothing necessarily wrong about doing something that was done before. The name of the game here is not to come up with a new fad and a new set of ideas if things that have been tried and tested work. Furthermore, this restructuring argument is different because it is system-oriented, not just school-oriented. The trick here is not just finding a few interesting things to do that have been done before, but getting a whole package of important things to do and putting the package together right. That is really where the art comes in all of this. So the idea is that we want to change the whole system for a sustained period of time. It is not enough to do what was sometimes done in the past, simply to create an isolated number of schools that are briefly permitted and tolerated to experiment with alternatives while the rest of the system goes merrily along the way as has been the case in the past.

The trick here, then, is to put the pieces together in the right way. Having said that, let me also quickly point out that the goal is not to get every school to look like every other school when we are done with the restructuring process. Uniformity is not the watchword here. If anything, diversity is the watchword. We expect schools to look different from the way they do now and quite different from one another as they go through a restructuring process.

Curriculum And Instruction

What then are we talking about when we talk about restructuring schools? I want to spend just a few moments to focus on four particular areas. The first has to do with

curriculum and instruction. It is important that this be the starting point because the name of the game here is to find ways of changing the level and distribution of student outcomes, to find ways of changing what students know and are able to do, and to find out how many of them know and are able to do what we expect of them. The place to start looking is the whole set of issues around how we organize curriculum and instruction. If we want students to acquire higher-order skills, we need a set of goals which adequately reflect those skills. We need a set of student assessment tools that also adequately reflect the knowledge and skill base. If we continue to test only basic skills performance, in all likelihood that is what we will continue to get from the system. We need to design a set of learning tasks and activities and teaching strategies that are well-oriented towards helping students acquire higher-order skills.

Let me give you one or two illustrations of what I have in mind here, one from the world of research and one that complements it from the world of practice. There has been a growing body of research in the cognitive sciences that looks at how skilled readers become skilled readers. The findings suggest that the way in which we currently organize curriculum, particularly to help students who do not become skilled readers, may be backwards. What they have found is that people who are skilled readers are not just skilled at decoding the words on a page, putting blends together, or sounding out a word. People who are skilled readers, little kids who have become skilled readers, take a very active role in interpreting and bringing meaning to what they read. When they read they ask questions about what they are reading. They compare it to what they know. They anticipate what is coming next, and if it does not fit with what they anticipate, they go back and reread and think about what they have read. They are constructing meaning from the text. They are not just sounding out the words. Put another way, they are using higher-order skills in order to control how they learn to read.

But what do we now do for kids who do not do well on our measures of basic skills in reading? What we typically do is put them in a remedial program, give them more drill and practice on the basic skills, and say to them, "As soon as you get the basics down we'll be happy to help you learn some of these good higher-order skills." What we ought to do for kids, particularly those who do not catch on to these basic reading skills quickly, is put them in programs that emphasize the higher-order skills as a way to help them acquire the basics.

There is fascinating evidence from some real life programs from around the country that shows dramatic gains in student reading scores by taking this approach. This is not, however, the way we typically organize curriculum and instruction. Let me give you an example that will illustrate this point. There is a summer remedial program in New Orleans for kids in grades 4 to 6 who are at least a year behind in their reading achievement. They have a three-hour block of time each day for a five-week period that they devote to reading. They do virtually no worksheets, drills, or practices of the conventional kinds. Rather, what they do is they have a Great Books program, a peer tutoring program, kids reading aloud to each other, kids doing oral book reports, and kids doing a lot of writing. In short, they create a variety of language-rich experiences for students, sometimes in whole class situations, sometimes in small groups, sometimes in groups of just two kids. They use time in very flexible ways, and they switch around the grouping practices quite a bit. And the results are dramatic. For three years running now they have noticed more than a year's growth in reading achievement on the College Board's Degrees of Reading Powers test, which is one of the better measures of higher-order reading skills.

What is fascinating about this program in New Orleans is that despite the fact that they had such dramatic success over the summer, you do not find these instructional practices in the schools during the rest of the school year. And you have to ask

yourself, "Why not?" Something works so well in the summer, why are they not using it during the rest of the school year?

The answer to this question, as best as I have been able to find out, begins to illustrate what the struggle for restructuring is all about. It turns out it had been literally inconceivable for the teachers in this summer program that they could take these practices and use them during the rest of the school year, so inconceivable that for the first two years the thought did not even cross their minds. They felt constrained in their practices during the school year. The combination of class size requirements, homework policies, time allocation policies, textbook selection, and so forth constrained the way they taught and made it impossible for them to consider doing something this different, even though they had firsthand experience with it.

So one might say that to a large degree restructuring is trying to figure out how to take the New Orleans summer program, get it into the New Orleans schools for the rest of the year, and break down the structural, psychological, and policy barriers that get in the way of that attempt. That is a very short version of the curriculum and instruction issue.

Restructuring Authority And Decision-Making Practices

A second area has to do with restructuring authority and decision-making practices. The argument here, basically, is that if you want the New Orleans summer program in your school, you need to decentralize decision-making and expand involvement in decision-making. Now I have to confess, I am not entirely sure how this works in a state like Nebraska, one which has such a large number of very small school districts. Decentralization is easier to talk about when you have a large district with a lot of schools and you are pushing power and decision-making down from the central office to the school building level. The general trend is to have more decisions about curriculum and instructions, more decisions about staffing, and more decisions about resource allocation made at the site level, not by the principal alone, but by teachers

working together and with substantial parental involvement in making those decisions. So it is moving authority down and moving authority out in order to give schools the autonomy they need to figure out how best to organize curriculum and instruction for their students.

Rethinking Staff Roles & The Teaching Profession

A third area that needs to be restructured has to do with rethinking the nature of staff roles and the teaching profession. There are several different arguments here that I would like to briefly mention for you.

One is that if we want teachers to be involved in making decisions collaboratively at the site level, then we need to reconceptualize the role of teacher. If a teacher's role is largely to spend a large portion of the day in front of kids, with very little time to interact with other adults, then it is virtually impossible to include any kind of collaborative decision-making. Now, we have seen very exciting and effective programs that promote collegial decision-making. But by and large the way that this happens is that the school improvement committee gets together for coffee and doughnuts once a week about six o'clock before school starts, or they get together Thursday evenings for beer and pizza in order to do their planning. Well, you can only get so much improvement out of a coffee and doughnuts or beer and pizza strategy. If we want people to work together to plan a new curriculum, to improve instructional strategies, to be able to observe each other and work with each other, then we need to reconfigure the role of teachers so they are not limited to spending 90 percent or so of their time directly instructing kids.

This is where the notion of lead teacher from the Carnegie Report comes. There would be some people in the school who spend part of their time teaching but who would have part of their time set aside for mentoring beginning teachers, for working on curriculum, for organizing a school improvement activity, and so forth.

I think you can see that if you begin to create these new leadership roles for teachers, you need to think about different ways of using their time. You also need to begin to think about different roles for principals, because if the teacher's role is going to change, then principals will have to get used to being leaders of leaders rather than just leaders of teachers in the more conventional sense. So if we begin to make some of these changes in the teacher's role, then everyone else's role is going to have to begin to change as well.

Reward, Incentive & Accountability Systems

The fourth and final area that I want to mention has to do with restructuring reward, incentive, and accountability systems. We organize accountability in this country primarily at the state or local level. The state sets some rules and regulations or the local district sets some rules and regulations, and schools are held accountable for being in compliance with them. So the primary argument or question between the top of the hierarchy and those lower units in the system becomes, "Are you doing what we told you to do, are you in compliance with our rules and regulations?" But the only ones we ever hold accountable for performance, for results, are students. We give them minimum competency tests and say they cannot graduate or be promoted unless they pass the test.

Part of restructuring has got to involve a shift in the nature of accountability systems to where the focus of accountability is on results. The target of accountability is the school building because that is where the results happen. There is discussion of such changes in many states. It is beginning to happen here with discussion about performance-based accreditation. States are looking for ways to provide rewards in the form of discretion or discretionary dollars to schools that have significant gains in performance. They are also looking for some effective form of intervention, technical assistance, or, in some cases, a literal takeover of a district where there is persistently poor performance by a school. So we need to create a system of rewards and

incentives for schools and for school systems that focus on performance, that reward unusually good performance, and that begin to intervene and turn around school systems in situations where the performance is particularly poor.

To sum things up, then, this morning I have tried, first, to lay out the issue of why restructuring is important. The argument very simply is that we have an enormous gap between the current performance of the education system and what we require from it. We need to find some fairly dramatic ways of closing that gap. Second, I have suggested that if we are going to restructure the system we ought to be paying attention to how we organize curriculum and instruction, authority and decision-making patterns, staff roles and responsibilities, and the nature of the accountability system.

THE COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS

By

Dr. Robert McCarthy

McCarthy is Director of Schools for the Coalition of Essential Schools at Brown University.

I noticed that in the package you received there is a reprint of an article by Kathleen Rutledge about this conference, and it refers to me as working with the restructuring guru, Ted Sizer. Ever since I read that I have been trying to work through in my mind whether that makes me an assistant guru or a guru in training. When do I reach the point where I can be known as a guru? I am certainly not known as an expert among the faculties of the high schools that I ran for 16 years. In fact, any claim I make to expertise would be greeted there with total disbelief or hilarious laughter. So all these terms are quite, quite interesting for me, being a year away from working in Brookline High School, a large urban public high school in Massachusetts.

I am happy to be here and to talk about the Coalition of Essential Schools, because I think the Coalition of Essential Schools contains some ideas and notions that help clarify in the minds of school folk exactly what we are talking about in terms of restructuring. I would like to begin by reading a relevant quotation that someone gave me a few months ago. "We trained hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form into change, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganization, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization." Now that was said by Gaius Petronius in A.D. 66, and as my early work was as a history teacher, those kinds of things kept cropping up in my world. I also remember one of my students defined celibacy saying, "Celibacy is a rare and

sometimes fatal disease." And since we were covering the period of the Middle Ages he added, "sometimes afflicting those in middle age." At the time I thought this was quite funny; I don't think it's so funny at the present time.

So a lot of things keep coming back to me. I remember Ted Sizer's aphorism, "Less is more," which I urge that you not apply to all sections of your life. However, I think it very clearly applies to schools. There is also something I like to say when I talk with a group who is perhaps hearing for the first time a detailed presentation about the Coalition of Essential Schools. That is, "Welcome to a conversation." I say this because what we at the Coalition believe in, what we try to organize, to structure, and to encourage, is a conversation about teaching and learning and young people among colleagues in schools across the country.

The initial Coalition effort began with eight schools in 1983. We now have about 58 schools involved in various stages of implementing the principles advocated by Ted Sizer. When we get together at our meetings, workshops, and forums what strikes us most is that they are conversations, conversations among teachers about how to best organize their schools to make them more effective for teaching kids to use their minds well. So what I would like to do this morning is briefly describe what the Coalition is not, and then to describe what it is.

WHAT THE COALITION IS NOT

Neither An Alternative School System Nor A Model

Let me start by explaining what the Coalition of Essential Schools is not. First of all, we are not an alternative school movement. We are not about restructuring and reorganizing the branches of the tree. We are about reorganizing and restructuring the trunk of the tree. What we would like to see is the best of the pedagogy and curriculum that emerged from the alternative school movements in the sixties and seventies move into the main body of education.

We are also not a model. We recognize the enormous differences in schools, just as those of us who work in schools recognize the enormous differences in kids. Therefore, the Coalition rejects a top down model of school reform. We feel there is an essential tension which can be and is being resolved in schools, a tension between leadership and empowerment which is different from the tension between top down and bottom up. The leadership of a school can provide the resources and support necessary for teachers to begin thinking seriously about their pedagogy and curriculum.

In a Coalition school the majority of the faculty must vote to join the Coalition before they are accepted into the Coalition. We also do not talk very much about restructuring at first. We believe that the first conversations that must take place in schools thinking of restructuring are conversations about pedagogy, curriculum, and what prevents teachers from doing their jobs well. If as a result of the conversations about pedagogy and curriculum the school discovers it must reorganize itself, then that is when they go about restructuring. Not before.

To put it another way, as Ted Sizer would say, "We are not about putting old wine in new bottles." We do not think that the approach to restructuring should be to look at the shape of the bottle first. We think that the approach should be to look first at the kind of wine you have to put in the bottle. Then, if the shape of the bottle does not seem to help the development of that wine, you change the shape of the bottle. So what drives us in the restructuring effort is pedagogy and curriculums and classrooms.

Not A Quick Fix

The second thing I want to stress is that we are also not a quick fix. We are not talking about proposals and programs that can be accomplished in three years, or five years, or even seven years. We argue that when John Kennedy said that in 10 years the United States would put a man on the moon and get him back alive, he did not add that if you fail to do it in 18 months we will take away your funding. He recognized that this was a long-term commitment by an organization of people willing to take the risk of

trying to put a man on the moon. Similarly, we in the Coalition argue that the task that schools have is more difficult than putting a man on the moon.

Neither Heroic Efforts Nor Prohibitive Expenses

The third thing to remember is that the Coalition also emphasizes that we are not a heroic effort. As Frank Newman, head of the Education Commission of the States, frequently says, "We do not need heroic teachers or heroic principals. What we need is to give good people, good teachers, and good principals the opportunity to do what they do best: to teach, to help kids develop, and to develop their minds."

Fourth, and finally, the Coalition's approach is not prohibitively expensive. Our position is that after initial start-up costs for teacher planning, for travel to symposiums and workshops, and for freeing up some time for teachers, a Coalition school should neither exceed the previous operating costs for the school by 10 percent nor go below them by 10 percent. So our position is that a restructured school need not be prohibitively expensive.

WHAT THE COALITION IS

So what are we? The Coalition of Essential Schools believes that the focus of a school should be teaching kids to use their minds well. It is as simple yet as profound as that. The Coalition would say that in order to do this any act or any expenditure of a school's resources that takes away from that essential mission should be closely examined.

A Blameless Critique

We are a group of about 60 schools that are reordering their priorities and are guided by the nine common principles emerging from Ted Sizer's work on high schools. Basically, the work of the Coalition is underpinned by the research from a study of high schools that is contained in three books: Horace's Compromise, by Ted Sizer, The Shopping Mall High School, by Art Powell, and The Last Little Citadel, by Bob Hampel. These books contain the essence of the Coalition's philosophy.

In Ted Sizer's book, Horace's Compromise, Horace is a composite teacher, and what the book chronicles in a gentle and sensitive way are the compromises that good teachers must make because of the working conditions under which they are expected to perform. The belief expressed in the book is that by reordering the priorities of the school Horace can be liberated to do what he has been trained to do.

Shopping Mall High School focuses on the curriculum of the high school. The term "Shopping Mall" was not originally conceived of as a pejorative term, although it has been interpreted that way by many people. What the authors were trying to do was to develop a metaphor to look at our high schools: Just as a shopping mall has specialty shops, so does a high school. The high school specialty shops are advanced placement courses, honors courses, remedial courses, and at-risk courses for at-risk kids. In those specialty shop courses the material seems to be a little better, the class sizes tend to be little lower, and the teachers tend to be more actively engaged. But as in a shopping mall you have the other stores--Sears, Almy's, Zayre's, whatever are the Nebraska equivalents of those stores--where the service is not as good, where the material tends to be a little shoddier, and where you have to wait in line to get your packages checked through. In a high school the courses for average students reflect that shopping mall mentality. High school courses for the average kid tend to have higher class numbers and tend to be more textbook-driven.

Furthermore, what often happens in a high school is that the average kid is able to easily avoid getting challenged to learn to use his or her mind well. I can speak from experience on this because in high school I was a master of hiding. I went to a high school as a standard student. I was in the standard track, sometimes basic but mostly standard. I was able to make compromises and deals all the time. So when I read Shopping Mall High School, I said, "That's me" because I was able to go through four years of high school without a teacher ever asking me a question. It was wonderful. I would come to a class and I would make the following deal with the teacher: "Listen,

I'll come to class, I'll do the work, I'll behave myself, just don't call on me." And then as a teacher, my first few years teaching when I had 150 kids, the deal would go this way from my point of view: "Listen, kids, you come to class, you do the work, if you make an effort, you'll pass this course. Just don't cause me any real difficulty."

Those compromises and treaties are made every single day in high schools across the country, and they are not evil compromises. Students are driven into it by the situation just as the teachers are. So what essentially happens in this shopping mall high school is that students, particularly average students, can go through four years at that school without ever being challenged intellectually and without ever being held accountable. They can do this because the structure of the school allows them to hide.

Finally, the third book, The Last Little Citadel, is a history of the high school from about 1940 to 1980, and its basic point is that the structure, organization, and assumption of American high schools have not changed in those 40 years. Now, I think all of us know that if we move back further in time, we would see that the structure of the high school has been the same since the 1920s. Indeed, the structure of the high school reflects a recommendation of the Committee of Ten made in 1910.

So the essential point of the three books is a kind of blameless critique, one which urges that the way we run our high schools results in kids who are not intellectually challenged and talented teachers who are being compromised.

Less Is More

Another of the guiding principles of the Coalition that these schools are trying to adopt is that "less is more," that the notion of coverage must be re-examined. I remember that when I was a history teacher I taught a course in world history, and we would begin in Egypt, rush over to Mesopotamia, leap across the Mediterranean to Greece and Rome, shoot up to the Middle Ages, jump across to American, and so forth. But I would never make it to the present; I would usually wind up just beyond World War II. That was in the sixties, and the kids used to call the course, "From Adam and

Eve to Jack and Jackie, by Mr. McCarthy." So no wonder students get that sense of celibacy being what it is.

The Coalition also maintains that teaching ratios in high schools should be no more than one to 80. Not one to 80 per class, but one to 80 for the total load. The Coalition argues that for a teacher to be able to get students to use their minds well the structure must be personalized, and instruction cannot be personalized if you expect a teacher to teach 150 kids. It cannot be done. No matter what you do it is impossible for a teacher to get to know students well if he or she is responsible for 150 of them.

Another principle of the Coalition is that teachers should be generalists, that teachers should teach more than one course. Teachers should be trained by their colleagues and by universities to teach both math and science or history and English. This is the only way you can change the school structure and the school schedule to get the teacher to student ratio down to one to 80.

Let me conclude by telling you what the Coalition of Essential Schools offers to schools. Over the course of a year we offer symposiums, workshops, institutes, and forums. These are teacher training institutions. They are designed to provide opportunities for our teachers to learn more about the student being the worker, about getting kids to use their minds well, and about looking at the structure of a school.

So, finally, answer the question, "This is all very nice, but what do I do on Monday?," I suggest that you read some of the books I mentioned and take a look at our prospectus. But most important, be sure when you go back to your school that you are able to define the prize of restructuring, that you know what you are about, and that you know what the end is. The prize of restructuring should be to create conditions in schools where students get to use their minds well.

FOUR PRACTICAL POINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

By

Dr. Beverly Anderson

Anderson is the Associate Executive Director of the Education Commission of the States in Denver.

It is a pleasure to be on the panel with Mike Cohen and Bob McCarthy. I have known Mike a long time, probably about 15 years. One of the first pieces of advice he gave me was never get between a dog and a hydrant. I thought that was very brilliant of him. Then I met Bob McCarthy just over a year ago and we have been spending a lot of time together. As Bob and I were walking down the street one day he said, "Bev, never get between a dog and a hydrant." Now what they really should have told me was never get on a program between the McCarthy-Cohen show and the conference break, but I am afraid that is where I am located.

I would like to focus on some of the challenges that we face within a state as we move from schoolhouse to state house in this effort to restructure and, as was mentioned earlier, as we try to get the whole system working in sync. I basically have four points that I want to make about some of the practicalities. The first is that restructuring requires a long-term commitment and it requires change throughout the system. If you are going to get engaged in restructuring, you need to be prepared to stick with it for at least five years and more likely for ten. The second point I will make, and I will come back to these, is that we need to recognize in restructuring that we have to move forward on about four fronts at once: We need to be developing a shared vision of what the new education system should look like. We need to be stimulating action by people at all levels in the system. We need to be encouraging reflection and shared accountability that keeps these changes moving forward, and we need to be building the

coalitions and collaborations that provide the support needed to move forward. The third practical point has to do with policymaking. I would like to emphasize that as we talk about policy approaches at both the state and local level, we realize that we have to use the full range of policy options available to us. Finally, the fourth point that we need to keep in mind is that restructuring requires a coordination and leadership strategy that is responsive to the complexity of all this.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Now let me go back and hit each of those in a bit more detail. First of all, restructuring requires a long-term commitment. This is essential. We have had fad after fad in education, and we have all been through those a number of times. If we are really going to make substantial changes in the structure, we have got to stick with it for a long time.

One of the reasons why this length of time is required is that we are making fundamental changes in the way people have been thinking and acting for years and years. We are asking people to develop new skills, new ways of teaching, and new ways of leading. We are asking people to try out new roles. If we were just asking one group at a time it would be one thing, but these groups are all very interconnected. We are calling on people throughout the system to play new roles and yet carry on at the same time.

So this whole process will also require risk taking, yet as a society we are not particularly good at that. We have gotten ourselves in the position that if things do not get fixed instantly, we figure it is a failure and we should just move on. But in the restructuring effort we need people who are willing to take risks, to allow failures, to allow trial and error, and to move through. We need people who do not expect instant success but expect to learn from what they have tried and move forward.

MOVING ON FOUR FRONTS AT ONCE

In addition to a long-term commitment, we need to be thinking about how to organize ourselves in a way so that we can move forward on about four fronts at once. We cannot do one thing and then stop and expect the next thing to come along automatically. We need to be strategically guiding the whole progress.

Developing A Shared Vision

The first thing that we need to be thinking about is how to develop a shared vision for a new education system. Now there are two words I want to emphasize here. The first "shared" and the second is "vision." We need to be thinking about what is down the road. We need to be looking at what schools should look like in the future and we need to be asking, "How do we get lots of people to understand the new structure of schools and the new ways of teaching that should become the norm?" One of the things I think we need to be particularly careful about in developing the shared vision is that we involve people in the community, as well as those strictly within the education system, because they are crucial to making this all succeed.

Stimulating Action

A second front we need to move forward on is stimulating action. Part of the process of building a vision is starting to act in bits and pieces and thereby making it a reality in our own lives. So it will take a great deal of debate and discussion about how we can make that vision something that is both personal for each of us yet consistent with the roles that we play in the education system.

We also need to allow time for people to get new ideas and to visit places, come back, sit down, and brainstorm about how this will fit into their particular situations. People need to have a sense of personal support for making these changes. Sending out a memo may not be the way to inspire people to get really engaged in this effort. Furthermore, one of the biggest problems we run into in this notion of restructuring is that it is so easy to start pointing fingers and say, "This whole problem is your fault,"

or, "It is the teachers' fault," or, "That is the administrators' fault." But this sort of thing does not help, and besides it is really no one's fault. The changes that are required are due to broad social, economic, demographic, and technological changes that are bigger than any of us. What we need to focus on is how we all start to play a part in making the needed adjustments, not on finding fault.

A Different Kind of Accountability

We also need to be thinking about accountability; it is part of our lives. But the trick is to do it a little differently from how it is often done. As we encourage people to move forward, we need to stimulate them to try new ideas and to think of what it is that they really want students to learn. So we do want them to be focused on outcomes. However, as we look at our accountability during the early stages, we may not be emphasizing so much whether they succeeded in achieving the desired outcome for students but whether they were on course. Were they discussing ideas? Were they trying new ways of doing things? Were they reflecting on what happened? Were they saying, "Oh yeah, I see now what that didn't quite work, but if we would do it just a little bit differently I think we can get it to work. Let's try again?"

Too easily our accountability systems are focused only on success. Unfortunately, that does not give people time to reflect, adjust, and try again. So we need to be sure that accountability in this structure is a reflective kind of accountability.

Building Collaborations

The fourth front we need to be moving along is building collaborations. This is extremely important because if we are going to change structures we have to start developing new relationships among people in order to figure out what structural changes are needed. Those partnerships also stimulate people to try new ideas and thus energize the system.

It is necessary to remember that there are about four things that seem to be crucial for building good collaborations. One is that everyone has to have <u>something</u>

to contribute. If you are trying to build a collaboration where some party is not contributing it is very unlikely to work. A second thing is that there needs to be mutual regard for one another. Third, we need to be focused on a common goal, and fourth, we need to be building trust. These four, then, are some of the key elements for having good collaboration within a school, across schools or districts, with a community, and wherever it might be throughout the system.

To summarize, then, restructuring involves trying to engage simultaneously on the following four fronts: developing a shared vision; stimulating action to make that vision a reality; engaging in reflective accountability; and building collaborations over this extended five or ten-year period.

POLICY TOOLS

The third point I would like to address is really for legislators, school board members, superintendents, and other policymakers. This concerns what kind of policy tools we should use during this process. Now there are basically four types of policy tools. One is incentives. A second is building capacity, frequently interpreted as staff development. A third is mandates. The fourth is actually making changes in the system.

Incentives & Capacity Building

Now, when you look at where we generally are in restructuring, the order in which I have given you those policy tools is probably the order in which we need to use them. At this point in the process we need to concentrate on using incentives and capacity building. What we are initially trying to do is to inspire people to try something new and to find the leaders among the people throughout the system.

I think we all know that in most any group of people you have three types. You have leaders, you have followers, and you have laggards and naysayers. The way you inspire new things and find the leaders is by using incentives, giving small grants here or giving recognition there, or bringing them together in some new ways. At this early

stage we also emphasize the use of capacity building. By this we are trying to give people the opportunity to learn new skills and to see different ways of doing things, so that they really develop the capacity to move forward into these new areas.

Mandates & System Changes

As we go along, mandates and system changes, the third and fourth tools, become more important. As for the third tool, in the Netherlands they have a policymaking approach under which they do not mandate something until at least half the people are already doing it. I think that is a pretty sensible approach because you need to have the time to figure out how things should work. You need people out there trying it out. Then you know a bit better what to mandate, whether it should be at the state level or at the local level, and just what the shape of it should be.

Fourth, and finally, there is the policy tool of system change. Although this whole movement is labeled as "restructuring," that is not its purpose. Its purposes are to help all students learn to use their minds well and to help get the system working in a way that efficiently supports that goal. The business of making the structural changes needs to come at the end once we have figured out how the system should change.

It is a bit of a trick to move from the fairly rigid structure that we have all known and loved for years and years into a new structure. What we really need to be thinking about is how to make that transition. There are many states now that are trying out the approach of saying to schools, "Okay, we are simply going to waive all rules and regulations for you. You just ignore the structure for now and figure out what you think is going to work best." Basically, what we are doing is giving people a chance to free up a few experimental situations and then see what comes out of that as they go along.

COORDINATION STRATEGY

The fourth and final point I want to make is that as we go through this very complex process, we need to have some kind of a coordination strategy that recognizes its complexity. Now, I am sure every state and group and school will come up with different ways of doing this but let me just give you an example of what some states are doing. This is based on some work that the Education Commission of the States and the Coalition of Essential Schools are doing. We have an effort going called "Relearning with Re: Learning," so you can read it two different ways. The notion is that if we are going to restructure the whole education system, we do not just need to have some schools experimenting with these notions. We also need a couple of other groups in place to guide and help be a part of making these adjustments.

To begin, the states that are involved in this make a five-year commitment, a commitment on the part of the governor and the chief state school officer. They agree to help support about ten secondary schools that are making changes decided upon by the faculties of those schools. There is also a school coordinator who is in touch with these schools, who helps them share ideas, and who gets ideas from the Coalition and other places.

Another component which is a very significant part of this structural change is a cadre of people. This consists of people from the classroom (teachers, and in some cases even students), people from the governor's office, and representatives of everything and everybody in between. They periodically get together and talk about how the vision for education is changing in their state and where adjustments need to be made as they move along. They talk about how they can work differently with the folks in their groups and with their administrators to get, for example, different kinds of training support. This cadre becomes a coordinating group looking at how to keep all of this moving along well.

Finally, there is a steering committee that includes the governor, some legislators, and the chief state school officer. This committee focuses on trying to sense when it is time for some major policy changes and also on explaining to the public the kinds of changes that are needed and why they are needed. We need to continually remember how crucial it is to bring on board people from all levels of the community and to help them understand the changing nature of the education system as it relates to our broader social and economic world.

Opportunities Disguised As Problems

So there are four points that I would like to leave with you. First, if we are going to restructure we need to make a long-term commitment, probably five or ten years. Second, we need to move forward on about four fronts at once: developing a shared vision, stimulating action, engaging in reflective accountability, and building coalitions. Third, we need to use multi-policy approaches. Fourth, we need to have a coordination strategy that recognizes how complex all of this is.

I think we are in some of the most exciting times that we have ever had in education. It is important for us to remember that the most wonderful opportunities are sometimes brilliantly disguised as insurmountable problems, and that our basic task is to unveil those opportunities and take advantage of them.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE AND RESPONSES FROM THE NATIONAL PANEL

Question 1:

Are we in effect asking people who are products of the current system of education to make decisions to change that system? Isn't it unlikely that those individuals will make those kinds of decisions?

Robert McCarthy:

Nothing could be further from the truth. I speak here from the work we have been doing in schools where the teachers are products of the system you described. This experience has given me the opportunity and resources to re-examine the way they are teaching and developing curriculum. There is an enormous wealth of talent, creativity, and imagination among the teaching corps in this country. Once they are freed from the constraints they are under and are given support and resources to begin looking at different ways of teaching and different ways of organizing their lives, their creativity and imagination are enormous. That is no surprise to me or to most of us who have worked in schools. As we say in the Coalition, when you see teachers get an opportunity to unreservedly make decisions about pedagogy and curriculum in collaboration with their principals, great things happen in the school.

Michael Cohen:

I do not disagree with anything that Bob just said, but I do think that in a number of respects the world may be a little bit more complicated than that. First, on the basis of work done with the Coalition and the Education Commission of the States, you can conclude that in just about every place where you find the small group of educators who are willing and able to try out some new ideas, they get some very interesting and effective things in place. Nonetheless, I think that overall the education system is one that does not easily change, and probably will not change on the scale that we are talking about unless there is leadership by educators and outside pressure as well.

It is interesting when you look at the school districts that have taken this restructuring agenda and are really pushing it, places such as Rochester, New York, Dade County in Florida, Louisville, Kentucky, Santa Fe, San Diego, and, most recently in an interesting way, Chicago, where they have basically stripped the local school board of a good deal of its powers and created school site management and governance arrangements. In none of these places did the initiative for change come largely from within the education profession itself. In each case there was a significant push for change coming from outside advocacy groups, from political leaders, and from business leaders.

So I think that when the question is no longer, "Can we find the small number of places to try out these ideas?," but, "Can we restructure the education system in its entirety?," then at that point we have to look for ways to create significant collaborative relationships between outside interests and the education system.

Beverly Anderson:

I agree very strongly with what has just been said. One of my concerns about this is that we can easily get ourselves in the following position: There is a lot of activity at the state and national levels, with people talking about it, and in the schools, with some teachers who are really trying to move ahead, but the middle of the system holds it steady. I think that principals and superintendents are the key to this. They are in some of the most difficult roles of all because for years they have been asked to do a certain task and now they are being called on to do something differently. Suddenly, they are asked to trust teachers in a new way or to turn over decision-making in a new way, and they are often in an untenable position. In order to really understand the nature of the dilemmas that are involved here, we need to think seriously about what kinds of support need to be offered to them and what discussions need to go on between superintendents, their communities, and principals.

Another thing that we need to keep in mind is how long it takes us individually to change. I was in one of the Coalition schools in Baltimore talking with a group of tenth graders who had been in this program for one year as ninth graders. They talked very articulately about the kinds of changes that were expected of them: They were much more engaged; the teachers did not give them the answers; and so on. Then I asked them how long it took them to understand the changes in their role and they said the entire ninth grade. Now, if it took the students that long to figure out how to function differently and they are only 14, how long will it take those of us who are over 35 and have been doing things a certain way for a long time? It is going to take a lot of time to change those behaviors, and it is also going to take a lot of time to really believe that the people we are responsible to mean it when they tell us to change.

Question 2:

Are you familiar with the Minnesota plan called "Access to Excellence," and in particular what are your views about the element of that program called Post-Secondary Enrollment Option?

Michael Cohen:

I am not sure I have the name right, but I assume the Access to Excellence plan in Minnesota is their choice plan. My understanding, which is admittedly sketchy, is that it has two basic components. One is that the state says that your kid has the option to attend school in any district in the state, and the state's funds, which are a significant portion in Minnesota, follow that child to wherever he or she goes. You are responsible for getting your kid to the border of the district, then the accepting district is responsible for transportation from their border to the schools. There are a few more details, but that is basically the plan.

The Post-Secondary Enrollment Option basically says that if you are in eleventh or twelfth grade you have the option of going to a local community college instead of the senior high school in your community. Now, from what I understand is happening in

Minnesota, a couple of things seem to be the case. One is that there is a small but significant proportion of kids taking advantage of one or the other of these options. There is another part of the program which basically tells kids who have dropped out of school that they can return to the education system and go to any school of their choice, not necessarily the one that they dropped out of. People I have talked to in Minnesota are very happy with that latter feature in particular because it has pulled a lot of kids back into the system. It tends to be easier for people to choose to go to a community college than to go to another district, partly for transportation reasons. In addition, I have also heard that the number of high schools offering advanced placement courses in Minnesota has gone up considerably in response to the option that kids now have to go to a community college.

I do not, however, think there have been basic changes in what schools do or in how they operate as a result of this. You need to understand that in Minnesota the impetus for this kind of open enrollment or choice plan came about in part because state policymakers were very frustrated about their inability to bring about a statewide testing and assessment program, which they thought would bring greater accountability to the system. They had been thwarted on this politically for a number of years in a row, largely by school administrators and school boards who opposed it because they did not want to see any kind of district-by-district comparisons. So the choice plan is in part an alternative form of accountability. Instead of testing the system and figuring out where schools are in terms of performance, they would adopt a more market-oriented approach to accountability that would give consumers more choice and presumably would thereby give the system incentive to be responsive. I am not sure that it is going to work all that well because I think you need a lot of choice and a lot of information in the system in order for it to have the intended effects.

Question 3:

I have a concern about using broad-based standardized testing to establish accreditation. In lieu of this, I guess I would favor some kind of itemized test as a way to measure a greater proportion of higher-order, as opposed to the lower-order, skills. And that would imply that I also think that those students who did not meet the performance levels be given some remediation or repeat. I wondered, since you mentioned forms of accreditation, if you had some specific comment on the nature of testing.

Michael Cohen:

Eight or nine states around the country have now moved or are in the process of moving towards some kind of performance-based or results-oriented accreditation or accountability system. I think that when we heighten the importance of tests in this way, we have an obligation to make sure that the tests we use measure what we want them to measure.

There are also other approaches that can be taken. In Vermont, for instance, the governor, the chief state school officer, and the state board of education have just launched an initiative to develop a statewide writing assessment program. A large part of this will be portfolios that students produce demonstrating the kinds of writing that they can do. In addition, the Coalition has been working for a while on exhibitions, I think that is the right term, as a way of creating opportunities and requirements for kids to demonstrate that they can undertake fairly complex kinds of performances. I think we need to be thinking along those lines, as well as thinking about developing pencil and paper measures that can be used to assess higher-order skills. I have no doubt that we need to do something to develop better measures if they are going to be more important than they are now.

Beverly Anderson:

The point that Mike just made is absolutely crucial for the restructuring movement. One of the things that we have been encouraging people to do is to think in terms of authentic performances, in terms of what is it that we really want kids to do when they get out of school. It is not necessarily being able to fill out multiple choice tests. For example, you might set up an assessment situation where students are actually engaged in a discussion and have a group of people who assess what they are doing. Here you would have the kids engaged in an authentic performance of the sorts that you want them to be able to do when they are out of school. The Coalition and others have been examining some suggestions about how you do that, and I think it is an extremely important aspect of restructuring.

Another important aspect of those kinds of performance assessments is that teachers get involved. We saw this very clearly in the writing assessment movement across this country when kids actually had to write a letter to the principal. Because teachers served as the scorers, they were trained to score the papers. As a result they learned how to teach writing much better, they came to understand the criteria of good writing. We also need to do this, to design our assessment activities in ways that make them almost become training activities for people throughout the system, not just ways of getting information about how kids are doing.

Robert McCarthy:

If you look at what happens in your schools every day, you will see that in several program areas kids are being tested in the way that has been described here. They are tested in terms of authentic performances, and these tests really are used to decide what the curriculum will be and what teaching is going to be done during the next several months. There are exhibitions designed to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. For example, in a football program an authentic performance takes place every Saturday and is directly used to make decisions about

what to emphasize the next week or two. Or think about music programs. If you think of a music program where a teacher decides to assess the kids with a paper and pencil test rather than having them play instruments, you can see how ludicrous it can be.

The idea and the challenge in Coalition schools and in the larger system is to take the notion of authentic performances that now regularly takes place in home economics and industrial arts classes and transfer it to the academic areas. We argue that you can measure a kid's understanding of concepts and knowledge by authentic performances which provide an incentive for him or her.

Question 4:

Dr. McCarthy, in the schools where the Coalition exists, have the teachers been given any kind of program to make them more receptive to your group's goals and methods? Dr. Anderson mentioned laggards and naysayers. What do you find with regard to that?

Dr. Robert McCarthy:

We have a naysayer workshop for teachers in Coalition schools, and it is the decision of the staff of a particular school to determine what segment, what group, or what numbers of teachers attend these activities. What we offer are workshops which help teachers transform their pedagogy so that they are more effective at making the students the workers. The workshops also assist teachers in developing ways of measuring student performance so that their curriculum is designed to that end. For example, the Coalition offers a series of five or six-day summer institutes for math and science teachers, for humanities teachers, for history teachers, and these institutes allow teachers to work with their colleagues to develop curriculum in a way that reflects what Coalition teachers call "essential questions."

The curriculum development process in a Coalition school usually begins with a group of teachers sitting down, for example, to work on a unit in American History and asking, "What is the essential question we want the kids to answer as a result of going

through this unit?" For a unit of American immigration, the teacher might come up with a question such as, "Whose country is this anyway?" Then the entire curriculum would be developed as that question casts a shadow back on what activities the kids would be doing. The resources, the pedagogy, and the opportunities for the kids would be based upon answering those questions and subsets of them.

What we are now able to do is help teachers get what we call "a bushel basket of examples" of how other teachers organize and teach units in their classroom, examples which reflect the Coalition's belief that the student should be the worker.

Question 5:

How do the Coalition schools maintain the academic focus and at the same time respond to other pressures, e.g., for such things as counseling services, health, nutrition, et cetera?

Robert McCarthy:

Try to shift the focus to teaching kids to use their minds well. That takes care of a lot of the implied tough decisions that come along with your question. For example, in Ted Sizer's book, Horace's Compromise, he holds up a teacher of electricity in a comprehensive school as an example of someone who is really developing curriculum and really using pedagogy to get kids to use their minds well. This example illustrates that if a school decides to continue to offer activities such as home economics, business education, industrial arts, and nutrition, it should not take away from getting the class sizes and ratios down in these other areas so that teachers are able to teach their kids to use their minds well.

Within those particular programs the focus should also be on having kids use their minds well. For example, a business education teacher really is not just teaching kids to use a word processor; what she or he should consciously be doing is teaching kids to be able to problem solve, to be able to look critically at a piece of machinery, and to be able to transfer the knowledge they have gained through learning about that

particular word processor to other aspects of the business world. The focus of the curriculum shifts from a mechanical, "Here's how to use this particular word processor," to a general way of approaching a subject matter that helps the kids learn to use their minds well, not just to solve a particular problem or to use a particular device.

It is a significant and conscious shift in the kinds of pedagogy and the kinds of curriculum assumptions that are made in those programs. The school itself makes the decisions about how it wants to reorganize its resources and reorganize its time. For example, in many of these schools guidance counselors become part of a team of teachers rather than having a centralized group of kids. You still have the guidance function, but teachers also get involved with some guidance functions. It depends on the individual school.

Michael Cohen:

I want to take a slightly different perspective on that question, because you mentioned services--counseling, health, nutrition, so on and so forth -- that I think are critical for young people in our society. This is especially true given the deteriorating nature of families in our society. Kids need help in these areas in order to succeed in school, in order to just make it through life.

What has happened in education over the last 20 years is that we have gone through this crazy debate over whether the family makes a difference or whether the schools make a difference, as though we do not recognize that in fact both do, and whether the schools have to do it all or the schools are only academically oriented. We forget that there is a whole other range of public agencies--the welfare system, the human services system, social services and so forth--that are increasingly providing the same kind of services to the same kids. The kids who need health services are also the ones who need counseling and are involved in the welfare program. Those systems now operate side by side in isolation from each other and provide very fragmented services to kids. One of the most exciting efforts these days in state government and,

particularly in light of the enactment of welfare reform in the last Congress, in federal government is to find ways of taking those services and integrating them at the service delivery level. This would give us a more cohesive set of services, one which focuses on whole kids and their families rather than on fragments of them.

Beverly Anderson:

We must get beyond the "either/or" to the "both/and": we have to do both of these things for kids. And one of the things that I think makes a fascinating link back to the notion of helping students to use their minds well is getting them to play a different role in the way services come into the school. Someone recently told me that she was considering having her social studies class go out and learn what all these different social service agencies do, so the kids who need the services would be learning where they are. Once again it would be the kids taking on more responsibility for their own lives, and it would involve blending together service and learning in the same situation.

Question 6:

Is a group such as the Educational Testing Service (ETS) aware of what we are talking about today, the whole restructuring movement? Have they responded and will they respond?

Beverly Anderson:

I think there are some very promising signs in that regard. ETS is very aware of and very interested in these things. The president of ETS has recently announced that in order to move in this direction they will make major changes in the national teacher exam, and they are also playing around with a number of other options in their other testing programs. They also administered the national assessment of educational progress, which is another place where they are trying out some of these methods.

This is vital because a lot of the pressure to keep the kinds of exams that we now have comes from the general public, and for this to work the general public needs to hear that these major tests are changing shape.

Michael Cohen:

I want to comment on that from a somewhat different perspective. It is very clear that we need to change the nature of the tests that we use, but I think we mistake testing for accountability in unhelpful ways.

What has happened about accountability in most states is that at some point the legislature says, "We need some accountability, here is a test." And by and large the response from the education community is, "That's a lousy test, don't do it." So, what the legislature hears is that these folks do not want to be held accountable, but the legislature also thinks it cannot trust them to report on their own about how well things are going. That is why they look for a test, because a test is presumably not subject to manipulation.

For a long time legislatures believed that they were getting accountability out of that. But we have come to learn that tests are subject to manipulation, and that is what teaching to the test is often all about. Furthermore, we learned that by and large we do not do a very good job of reporting scores on standardized tests anyway, so we use norms that are 10 years old and all of a sudden everybody is above the norm. So we still have found ways to manipulate the use of test data and the focus on tests.

The deeper issue is how can the education community develop trust with the legislature and with the public that elects it? It seems to me that you can begin to build more trust when the accountability system puts less emphasis on the kinds of standardized testing that we are using. That is, greater trust can be built when schools are perceived as places where educators tell the public, "This is what we are trying to accomplish; here is how we are going about doing it; here is how well or poorly we think we are doing; here are the problems we are running into; and here are the steps we are taking to address those problems." When schools are perceived as places where that kind of dialogue is forthcoming, then the emphasis on tests as accountability devices is going to lessen in ways that give you the kind of flexibility that you are looking for.

I also translated the question about accountability in a very personal way. Accountability becomes very specific at the local level when parents ask you if their daughter or son will get into the college of his or her choice. So we need to have a lot of assurances from college admissions officers that properly developed transcripts, letters of recommendation, and the like can allow kids to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, and that this tends to help them in college admissions.

Question 7:

What is the role of teachers' colleges in training teachers to use higher-order thinking skills and to use them in their teaching styles?

Beverly Anderson:

This is a really difficult area. People have a very difficult time figuring out how to influence the university. Universities are governed in a different way from the rest of the education system, so some of the levers that we use in the other parts of the system do not have the same effect. I was down in New Mexico last week and this very topic came up; it was interesting to hear the discussion. What came out was that the places where teachers are really learning these new skills are the community colleges. The faculty in the community colleges are rewarded for good teaching, while in universities they are often rewarded for research. I think that is one of the things that really needs to be changed.

PART THREE

SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING IN PRACTICE:

NEBRASKA PERSPECTIVES

Introductory Comments

By

Senator Ron Withem

Sometimes when we talk about restructuring, attend a national conference on it, or read an article about it in a national publication we have an unfortunate reaction. We think, "This is something we have to impose on the rest of the state." This particularly applies to those of us in Lincoln who make state policy. Sometimes it is as if we were the first people who ever heard of the idea. But given the nature of the restructuring movement there will be components of it already going on all over the state, perhaps even in the next district or the next classroom.

As part of the symposium we have a panel of six Nebraska educators who will address restructuring practices already going on in Nebraska. Among other things, their comments will help us avoid the unfortunate reaction I just described, and they will help us learn about the exciting things that are going on in the next classroom, the next building, and the next district.

MOVING BEYOND ADD-ON REFORM IN NORFOLK

By

James Merritt

Merritt is Superintendent of Norfolk Public Schools.

My interest in restructuring really began when I was an elementary school principal back in the late sixties. When I received a new school assignment, many of my staff members kept saying things like, "The kids are so dumb; they're not learning how to read; we don't know what's gone wrong." So I began examining that issue. I knew that some kids inherently have more ability than others, but kids are kids no matter where you go.

When I looked at the issue I found some amazing things in Fremont, Nebraska. The school in which I was principal had a 33 percent turnover of student population each and every year. Nobody in our school dreamed that we had that big a turnover. We knew we had kids moving in and moving out, but nobody dreamed that we had that big a turnover. So the real problem, as we came to see, was that we had a very lockstep method of teaching reading to these kids--you know, the low group, the middle group, and the high group. We tried to fit all these kids into the structure that we had concocted and they were not fitting. And every year we got 33 percent different kids, so every few years we almost had a whole new student body.

That was why you could not count on the fact that if you taught a skill at the first grade that would be adequate preparation for the next skill that you teach at second grade: The student we were ready to teach a certain skill in second grade may not have been in our first grade, thus may not have been adequately prepared. Consequently, we had to restructure the way we taught reading. We did not change many of the teaching methods. But we did change the way that we received students, the way we

looked at students, the way we analyzed what their skills were, the way we grouped them for instruction, and the way we approached reading in general.

The Limits of Add-On Change

My interest has continued through the years because I liken some of the things that we do in education to what Detroit did to the engine at the time that pollution standards and emissions controls came in. They took the same basic engine and kept adding parts to it that would prevent the emission of certain pollutants. Then the energy crunch hit and we had two diametrically opposed forces at work. On the one hand, we were adding more things to the engine to keep it from emitting all those dangerous pollutants, and on the other hand, we were trying to make the engine more efficient so it would burn less gasoline. The more items we added to the engine, the more gas it took to provide the power to move the car and to provide control. It was not until the auto makers were awakened by the fact the Japanese were taking away their business that they really looked and then designed a different engine.

I think that is where we are today in education. We tried to solve the many problems that we face in education by using what I call "add-ons," and add-ons are usually very limited in what they address. Then we plug them into a system, but we do not really plug them in. We glop them on just like Detroit glopped on pollution controls, without making the necessary changes. For example, the amount of time we have kids in school is only six hours, and that has not changed for a long time. Yet we have many different problems. The diversity, the demographics, and the knowledge that we have about teaching kids are far different from what they were in the past.

Restructuring in Norfolk: Project Student

That gives you a little bit of the history of why I am extremely interested in the restructuring movement. It comes by many names, as was said, e.g., "staff participation," "participatory management," and "decentralization." You can go down a long list of things that people use to try to characterize restructuring, but it is all of them

and more. Restructuring is a holistic process. You cannot divide children up into little bitty segments and try to teach one phase without affecting another phase. Similarly, our school system is an organism and, like the human being, if you change one part of it that affects everything else.

A few years ago, all of the excellence reports were coming out. That combined with our interest and with some input we had from parents in our community and led to the development of a goal called "the alternative education goal." As we addressed that goal, many of us looked at alternative education as a separate school where the kids who could not make it in the regular school went and found their educations. But that is not what the goal means. The alternative education goal is an alternative means of delivering education to students, not an alternative school.

After about two years of struggle, we did get a report to the board of education. It said, in effect, that if we were to design our school, these are the things that we would like to do but have not been able to do because of how we are structured or governed. There were a page and a half of ideas, really neat ideas, from very creative people. From that we then developed a proposal that went to our board of education.

The proposal was called "Project Student." We did not want to call it "Site-Based Management" because that is one thing. We did not want to call it "Decentralization" because that is something else; and we did not want to call it "Participatory Management" because that may be something else. I believe that what we have to do is to combine all of those in order to provide the very best instruction that we can for all the students in a given school.

In order to get at change, we have to unleash the creativity of the teachers in the school. So our project, which is to be implemented next year in Washington Elementary School, is very open-ended, but it also has some unique guidelines. The predominant guideline is that the principal of that school, along with committee members and staff members, will have to apply to be part of this school. This capitalizes on the voluntary

aspect which was addressed this morning. Because it is an internal change, it has to come from the people involved. So nobody should be forced to do it. Rather than dictate, we are giving them the opportunity to set their own destiny within some guidelines.

These changes are not new. Those of you who were in education in the sixties will recognize this, but today we know more about education. For example, we know more about how the brain works. We know more about stages of learning. We know more about the principles of learning. We know more about how to teach. So we need to incorporate what we have learned when we design basic guidelines.

There are four principles that the committee adopted and will work toward. First, progress in this school will be continuous, and movement from one learning objective to another will be based upon degree of mastery. This is sound theory and practice, but the graded structure of schools has prevented us from doing it. Second, instruction will fit the learning style of students and emphasize multiple learning modalities. Third, instruction will be appropriate for the student's stage of development. Fourth, we realize that learning is possible without teacher-directed instruction.

A New Commitment, A New Opportunity

Is anything new there? The commitment and the opportunity that we are giving them to accomplish it, that is what is new. I have also given them four guidelines to work under. First, their school has to be goal-driven before they get a budget. They have to identify what they will be working for during the next year. Second, they need to show that their need is responsive to the students and the parents. Third, they have to be result-oriented. And, fourth, it has to be team or work group- operationalized. We are not telling them how they have to organize; we are just saying they have to work in that mode and that they also have to involve parents. After all, parents are very critical. They are the ones who are going to say, "Why isn't my kid in the first grade room, with first grade teachers, and using a first grade reading book? I want to know."

And we need to say, "What's important, learning, or being in the book?" We need to improve our communication.

So, we have given them freedom to select their staff. We have given them a budget. We have given them some control over their time. We are going to measure accountability by perception and achievement. Finally, we have a time-line for start-up and completion.

These are the things we have been looking at in Norfolk for five years. We have worked on the theory that we can decentralize, and this is just a start. We are trying to start in one place and carry that over to the schools.

MASTERY LEARNING AND RESTRUCTURING IN COLUMBUS

By

Sandy Seckel

Seckel is a teacher in the Columbus public school system.

After I was asked to give this presentation, I received a packet of things to read to prepare me. As I sat home reading this on Saturdays and Sundays, in addition to the other school work that all educators do on weekends, I found that we are already addressing some aspects of restructuring in our schools. That is what I will talk about today.

Rethinking Teacher and Student Roles

I think one of the most important aspects of restructuring is that teachers rethink their roles in education. It is important that we believe that all students can learn and that all students can and should be given the opportunity to learn. As Mr. Merritt stated, mastery learning certainly is nothing new. Many of us have been in it for years, and one of the precepts of mastery learning is that all of our students can learn. If we give them appropriate instructional conditions, all of our students, not just some, can learn most of what we teach them. For example, we have identified that less is more. We have to take our curriculum and identify those essential skills that we need to teach our students, and then we have to find the most effective ways for teachers to convey those skills to our students.

In Columbus, my classroom and many of the other classrooms use a master learning model called "ECRI," which stands for the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, based in Salt Lake City, Utah. This mastery learning technique can be used with any basic reader you choose to use for language arts instruction. It helps us achieve some basic goals. For example, we need to teach students that learning is intrinsic. Since we cannot teach them everything they need to know in the six hours

that we have them during the day, we need to entice them to continue to learn. In addition many of us learn in different ways, so it would be unfair for us to stick all of our children into a structured curriculum and have all of them do exactly the same thing.

In my classroom and in other ECRI classrooms, we deal with these concerns by teaching the students a process by which they master skills. After we have taught the students that process, they make the decision about what they need to do to master the instruction I have given them. After all, our ultimate goal in school should be to teach students to be independent learners. They need to be able to decide what it is they need to do or to learn. They need to make those kinds of decisions for themselves.

Site-Based Decision Making and Collegiality

There is another aspect of restructuring which we have already incorporated. According to the restructuring movement, the decision-making process needs to begin at the building or site level, not from the top, not from the administrative buildings. I feel good about what is happening in Columbus at my building. We are now working on a process which allows our staff to develop inservice training that specifically meets our needs. This is not dictated by anyone else. Our principal, people from our service unit, and people from our administrative team come and help us. We identified the things we need to work on, the things that will enhance our skills in working with students. Those decisions came from our building. They did not come from the top down. When we are allowed to form those kinds of committees and to have those kinds of meetings it develops collegiality in my building.

Another thing that develops collegiality is that all the teachers in my building are trained in ECRI. When we talk after school, at noon, or in the morning, we all use the same language. It is wonderful to be able to go to another person and say, "My student did this in my classroom," or "I saw them do this," and they can say, "My kids do that too." I think it is really important for us to develop that type of harmony in our profession, and it needs to come from the building level.

Students as Teachers: Cooperative Learning Groups

As I said earlier, students in effective schools must take responsibility for their own learning, so we have to give them the opportunity to learn from others. One way that this is being fostered in my room and in many other rooms is by developing cooperative learning groups for students. For many years we felt that teachers were the only people who could dispense knowledge to students. But just as we all know that we learn well from our peers, so do students learn from other students. Thus, peer groups can help students learn better. It helps them to restate, to articulate, and to understand what has been shown to them. It also helps them build social skills which are going to be needed throughout their entire lives. Part of our job in school, after all, is to help them develop social skills, and one way of doing that is using cooperative learning groups.

Teachers as Decision Makers

We talked about teachers making informed decisions in their rooms. Columbus has adopted the instructional theory-into-practice model. We, as teachers, are praised and reinforced for making appropriate decisions in our room, for decisions which enhance the learning of our students. That can be done because our administrators are trained in the same technique. So when my administrator comes into my room, she knows what she is looking for, and I know what she is looking for. Then, when we confer, I can tell her what went well in my lesson and what helped my students learn. This puts the responsibility on me for what happens in my classroom. I do this because it works, because it helps me make decisions in my classroom, and that is part of restructuring.

In conclusion, I want to say that many of the features of the restructuring movement that were talked about this morning are already present in your district, in my district, and in many of the districts around Nebraska. We as a profession need to get out. We need to look at the research. We need to share with other people what is

working in our schools and why it is working. Through such exchanges we can all make better schools.

RESTRUCTURING AND ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS: THE VIEW FROM FATHER FLANAGAN HIGH

By

Dr. James E. Gilg

Gilg is the Principal of Father Flanagan High School in Omaha.

I will speak about some of the characteristics of alternative schools and the restructuring movement. Father Flanagan High School has 21 years of history in alternative schooling. and I have been there for 16 years.

Before going further, though, I need to address some reservations which you may have. First of all, some of you might be thinking the following: "I can disregard this because he is going to be talking about alternative schools and what he has to say really does not fit traditional schools." Or, "He is from a private school so it probably does not fit a public school." Or, "He is from an inner city school where most of the students are black, so it doesn't fit a suburban school or a school in a small town." Or, finally, "He's from a school that is now sponsored by Boys Town, so he has so much money he can do anything he wants. This won't fit my situation." I want to ask you to lay those aside. It is an alternative school experience, but it does have some applicability to other schools.

I must admit, however, that there are a couple of qualities or circumstances of alternative schooling that might give us a little head start in restructuring. First of all, we usually have high-risk youth, and those are youth that most everybody else is pretty tired of. When they get to the alternative school almost everybody else in the system says, "Do what you want, take care of them, don't bother us." So we usually have autonomy from the beginning; people do not really watch over our shoulders. Second, with this kind of student, if we do not do something worthwhile in the building and change things around to make it work for students, they leave. Therefore, if we are

going to be successful at all with them and keep them in the building, we are going to be forced to restructure.

At Flanagan we do have certain advantages. We started in 1968 at a time when many alternative schools were beginning across the country. The characteristics of Flanagan are very similar to those of other alternative schools, and they are based on different kinds of research on schools throughout the country. The messages you have been hearing this morning about restructuring are similar to what that research said about alternative schools. We are also usually small, and we are usually very personal. We have very little bureaucracy. Staff members usually do two, three, four, or five things at once. We have flexible groupings of students. We must be very attentive to the learning styles of individual students. We usually have self-paced learning so slow learners can continue at the same time that fast learners can continue to learn. Teachers usually have the authority to make all kinds of decisions about what is going to happen in their classroom because no one is sure of who is going to come or what they are going to be like when they do come. No administrator can sit on top and say, "This is what you're going to do." It is a very nurturing and supportive environment.

Finding the Middle Ground: Student-Teacher Partnership

I also need to say something about pedagogy. The traditional viewpoint about teaching in a traditional school is teacher-directed, with the teacher giving all the information and students taking it all down. This is something of an overstatement, but it gives one extreme. An alternative school environment is usually a kind of opposite extreme. The emphasis is on totally individualized learning packets, where students come in and work at their own pace and the teacher is there to hand out the packets and help everybody one-to-one. The teacher is just a facilitator. But at Father Flanagan we have moved to a kind of middle ground. We are neither totally teacher-directed nor totally student-directed. We are working in a kind of a middle ground partnership that we call "mediated learning."

Teaching Learning Skills

That is the theme behind our pedagogy. We have been aided in this by adopting a curriculum to teach thinking skills that is called "instrumental enrichment." It was created by a professor in Israel. It provides materials and exercises for teachers to use in teaching thinking skills, and a corresponding methodology to integrate those skills into the whole school experience and make them applicable to all the contents and curriculum areas.

For the past six years, then, the teaching of thinking skills has been the main focus of the school. Every teacher must teach the class. Even the P.E. teacher teaches thinking. We have found that this has transformed the whole atmosphere of the school, and it has provided us with quality learning in an environment where most of the time it is a struggle even to get the basics to happen.

The materials are designed so they can be taught to students. At the same time, students are trying to catch up on basic skills they did not learn. For example, even though a student cannot read very well, the student may be able to think very critically with higher-order thinking skills. The instruments show you how to make that happen; it is true that street kids of North Omaha can do syllogisms because I have seen it happen. So I would recommend that you investigate this particular methodology.

The Legacy of Nebraska's One Room Schools

My final comment is that I began my formal schooling in a one room rural school in the Sandhills, and as I listened to the ideas of restructuring, I was constantly reminded of the good things I remember about that experience. The school was small and it was personal. The classes were all integrated, one-on-one. I had to do a lot of work myself because the teacher was doing other things with students. I believe that many of the features of that one room school can be applied in different settings within our present environment. I would like to suggest, in fact, that instead of saying, "Less

is more," we might want to say, "Small is better." So perhaps in Nebraska, rather than being embarrassed about our many small schools, we ought to be proud of them.

A DONIPHAN TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE WITH LEARNING STRATEGIES AND RESTRUCTURING

By

Jan Herbek

Herbek teaches at Doniphan Elementary School in Doniphan.

I have a somewhat different perspective from some of the other people on the panel. I am involved with the Learning Strategies Project in Nebraska. Within my classroom and within the project, we are engaged in the restructuring process. So I come to you as someone going through that process, and I am going to talk about what it is like as you are trying to go through such a change.

The learning strategies we employed were developed by the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities at the University of Kansas, and they are designed for learning disabled and under-achieving students. The approach is based on the philosophy that learning disabled and under-achieving students can learn and can function independently, if they are given both systematic instruction in how to learn and the environment and the opportunity in which to use those skills.

Learning For A Lifetime of Learning

These strategies, then, teach students how to learn and how to perform academic tasks. The students do not just learn to do the steps involved in doing a task, they also learn to plan ahead, to carry through on the steps, and to evaluate their own performance afterwards. It is essential that they learn these things because knowing how to learn and how to perform are not only important in the academic setting but are important for the rest of the students' lives. After all, they will probably have to be retrained several times in their lifetimes for different jobs.

To accomplish this goal of developing strategic learners, the group at the University of Kansas has come up with a three-part model called the "Strategies

Intervention Model." The first part is the curriculum, the part we educators are probably more comfortable with. These are the published materials and the steps that the students will learn to help them gain knowledge, to help them store, understand and organize that knowledge, and to help them express that knowledge. The second part of the model is the instructional system. This includes the series of instructional steps that a teacher uses in working with students to help them learn the strategies. After this has been done, students can take those skills and the strategies into other classrooms and out into the other parts of their lives, allowing them to become more responsible for carrying on with those things. This means the teacher has to relinquish some control.

The third part of the model is the environment. The entire staff is involved in instruction in an organized manner. Other teachers help cue the students about what are appropriate times to use the strategies, thereby giving students feedback and encouragement as they go through these changes.

Changing Roles: From Product to Process

This approach involves a lot of role changes for the people involved, more than I realized when I first started it. It makes us focus on changing from a product-model, where information is given in return, to a process-emphasis model. The process-emphasis model deals with questions such as these: How is the student going to learn this material? How are you as a student going to learn it? How are you going to hang onto it? What are you going to do with it?

At Doniphan we are in the middle of this process. It takes a long time, and it was very comforting for me this morning to hear the other speakers say that it takes a long time. The students going through a project like Learning Strategies have to make major changes. In particular, there is a major change in their responsibilities, one which takes them several years to make. On the old product-model, students' responsibilities ended when the assignment was turned in. With the process-emphasis model, they are forced to change and to be more responsible for the learning and the programs that are going

on. They have to do some goal setting, for example, deciding when they expect to finish the strategy or when they expect to be able to prove they are using it elsewhere. In other words, the student becomes more involved as a worker and as a participant in the learning experience.

Meanwhile, teachers are also switching to a process orientation. This is especially the case for the resource teacher or whoever teaches the strategies to the students. As teachers become comfortable using the instructional steps, their roles change. You have to move away from a tutoring program, or whatever is currently being used, and adopt a long-term view of what the students need. Joint planning, committing blocks of time, and parental involvement also become more important. The parents' roles are also changing. They may need to be involved if the student needs to do more homework, to take more responsibility, or to be cued at home. The administrators' roles are also changing.

Expecting Success

It did not occur to me when I first started how important it was that all these things happen together. My experiences going through these changes and what I saw training other teachers in the learning strategy have also taught me that several things aid students and teachers as they go through these changes. For the students, it seems to be easier when there is an expectation that they can perform. The expectation here is not that they will immediately be able to perform and do it all on their own. It does not involve that kind of pressure. What it involves is conveying to students the sense that they will learn to do this, that they will be helped through the steps as they try, experiment, and change, and that eventually they will be able to do this.

This gives students encouragement, confidence, and a desire to participate. This is important because students are not sitting around waiting for us to say, "Gee, wouldn't you like to be more responsible?" In fact, I find that even with kids in the upper elementary grades, their mind-set is already ingrained into a product orientation. As a

result, I also think about what we teachers do, even with those little kids. We often say, "Oh, the paper is so nice," or, "You did a good job on this." Now in our heads we may well be thinking that the student is learning to become a better reader, to decode words, or to do this or that. But we do not really say so. Rather, we tell them that their paper is nice, their project is nice, or that they did a nice job. So they learn to be most interested in finished products, and this happens even earlier than was suggested this morning. It is not the ninth or tenth grades, but in the upper elementary grades. Therefore, the whole switch for students is really difficult.

As for the teachers, I find that the teachers who want to change and are there by choice are more successful. The support of the administration also helps ensure success. For example, a team of teachers that I helped train went back to their school and talked to their administrators about the learning strategies, and an administrator agreed to cover a teacher's study hall three days a week. This allowed the teachers to work with the resource teacher, and they could team teach the first year of implementing Learning Strategies. Now that was administrative support.

There is also support from co-workers. In Nebraska, we have the teachers who are using Learning Strategies come in teams, so there is someone else in their building they can work with. In addition, the teachers involved have in effect been given the administration's permission to try something different, and they are viewed as important, capable, and trusted. The administration has expressed its expectation that the teachers will succeed. The teachers have been given responsibility to make some decisions about the programs they are using, time to think through and implement those programs, and time to talk to their colleagues.

Teachers Training Teachers

When we break into small groups in our training sessions we give them a task related to the strategy. This gets them talking to each other about what is happening in their schools, what happens when you try this sort of thing, and what to do when this happens. Teachers really need that time with each other to talk things through and to help each other. All of them come up with roadblocks in terms of time, commitment for time, and rigid role expectations. The more rigid the expectations are about what they are supposed to do, the harder it is to incorporate change. Indeed, the most common thing I hear is a problem discussed this morning, that they are in a position of adding on, and adding on, and adding on, and nothing gets taken away to adjust for that. We recognize that the change process is somewhat uncomfortable for all of us.

The Learning Strategies Program is funded through a grant and is offered in conjunction with the State Department of Education. For the last two years we have used trainers who, like me, are teachers who have first used the program and have then been trained to work with other teachers. We are up to 18 now. The advantage is that we know exactly what the teachers are going through as they learn it. Our knowledge of the content greatly helps us when we explain to other teachers what we are doing.

However, there are some problems using teachers as trainers and being a teacher who is a trainer. Getting release time from the districts is difficult for some teachers. Preparing for class lessons that are missed and for the training sessions takes a lot of time. All things considered, though, it is an interesting project to be involved with.

A DONIPHAN PRINCIPAL'S EXPERIENCE WITH LEARNING STRATEGIES AND RESTRUCTURING

By

Gail Thompson

Thompson is Principal of Doniphan Elementary School.

I am concerned about having the best teachers in our school. Like you, my concern is for students. And who is with the students all the time? Teachers. So we want top-notch people. Now, I recognized that highly qualified teachers were leaving the profession, and I wanted to know why we were losing them. So I investigated, and these are the kinds of responses I got from people: I'm not challenged; the district blocks change; I'm not encouraged to do my best; I don't feel good about what I'm doing; I'm standing still, not growing and learning.

Restructuring and Keeping the Best Teachers

So as a result of working diligently and maintaining highly qualified teachers, I inadvertently became involved with a small restructuring process involving Jan Herbek. As she just mentioned, she had been receiving training in Learning Strategies for some time and had been implementing those strategies with her students in the resource room. She was excited, and as a result, it rubbed off on me and on the rest of our staff.

The first thing I knew, she was being asked to do some inservice training after school hours and that was fine. But then I was approached about her training, possibly full-time. People were after her to leave teaching to go out around the state and do this, and I thought, "We are in trouble." To be totally honest with you, the only way I could keep her was to say, "If you stay here maybe we can make some arrangements for you to do that during some school time." Then the problem was that I had to get money from our superintendent. Now, thanks to some state grant money, Jan is flying around

the state doing this training, getting more and more enthusiastic, and becoming a better teacher for us as she does so.

Administrators need to keep in mind that teacher-trainers have double duty. This is not an easy job. When she is gone from the building people wonder, "What in the world is she doing?" Well, she has prepared long step-by-step sheets for the substitutes who are teaching her classes, and then she has prepared for training teachers. So she is not leaving the school; she is going to school.

The benefits I see as a result of Jan's training teachers is that she has become a better teacher, she has become more proficient in her teaching skills, she is challenged, she is happy, she feels needed, and she has a sense that she is worthwhile. So I have a happy, confident, highly skilled teacher on my staff, and she should be teaching teachers. Who better to teach? Who better to know what is needed and what is going on than a teacher?

I truly believe that in order for change to become meaningful it needs to come from within. We know that meaningful change takes from three to five years of getting together and hashing things over until eventually things begin to gel. The day of the one-shot inservices should be over; teachers need the time and opportunity to train and be trained. They are ready and willing to take charge of their learning and their own school programs. As an administrator, I need to give them the freedom, encouragement, and support they need to do their best in the classroom. They need time to share, time to plan, and time to teach.

Some Warnings For Administrators

Let me just remind the administrators who are here of the kinds of things we might possibly find ourselves saying and doing to teachers. One thing we are doing is adding to the curriculum all the time. I know some of that is mandated by the state legislature and some of that is coming from another part of the country. But we are busy teaching values education, responsibility, potty training, drug and alcohol education, and all other

kinds of things, and nothing is prioritized. Nothing is deleted when we add. We just say, "Do it, we have to do it, you got to do it, and do it the best you can." So right now we are not efficient. Time is needed to organize, to prioritize, and to give continuity to what is going on in our schools. Who better to do this than teachers? They are the people in the front lines, and they are capable of working in a team effort with us to make our schools more meaningful places for kids to be in.

We often get the question, and teachers often get the question, "What's the public going to think when the kids aren't in school, when you have those times together?" But just because students are not in school that does not mean the teachers are not working. We need to educate the public about this so that they know that teachers need time to be trained, time to organize, and time to make a meaningful environment for our students.

Many times we do not make allowances for teachers to get together. There are even some of us who actually do not want them to get together. After all, they might gang up on us. More seriously, though, some of us are comfortable with rigid schedules, set times, and absolute curriculums with little change. But watch out, administrators. You are going to lose the best teachers in the state. We need their talents. We need them to help us know what to do. Let them teach. Let them help us do what needs to be done for education, and let us be open to change that will make our schools better places for students.

LEARNING TO SHARE AT THE SANDY CREEK SCHOOLS

By

Larry Ramaekers

Ramaekers is Superintendent of Sandy Creek School District in Fairfield.

I am one of five children. I have two older sisters and two younger sisters. And when I was very small and my mother would frost a cake, I would try to get to the frosting bowl as soon as I could, and I would spit in it. That way my sisters couldn't get a part of it.

Why did I tell you that story? Well, the interesting thing is that after about the third time I did that to the cake bowl, I had to learn how to share. And that is my topic today. I told that story because I will be talking with you about the school and the community in decision-making, and about sharing that decision-making. That is something that we as administrators need to do from time to time; we need to share the decision making that takes place in the school system.

Shared Decision Making

This is a very threatening thing, at least it was and still is for me, because it involves delegating authority to those we may not have full trust in. And here is the tension. Suppose that it is my responsibility to do a certain task, and I have to delegate that authority to someone else. But the accountability still rests on my shoulders; therefore, I have to trust the people I delegate that authority to.

So this is a real threatening thing, and it is something that I am continually learning. I think I share this with many administrators who are here today. I have had to grow up, then, in this respect; I have had to learn how to share.

I would like to talk to you about the school-community team approach. It is something that the Sandy Creek Schools have been involved in. As was stated this

morning, restructuring is not consolidation. But there is a sense in which it is consolidation. It is a consolidation not of schools but of thoughts and visions. This is what we are trying to do in Sandy Creek. It involves greater involvement of teachers and parents in some critical decisions.

For the last three years, we have primarily been working with this approach on the drug and alcohol issue, which concerns every school system in every community throughout the country. I do not want to focus on what we are doing in our particular school district relative to the drug and alcohol issue, but on the general idea or the concept of involving teachers, patrons, parents, and the school district. We have learned that if we approach an issue like drugs and alcohol, the school district must involve the parents and the community as well as the teachers and the students.

PRAISE: A Philosophy And A Plan

When we went through the training phase of this effort, we needed to give ourselves a name. We chose the acronym PRAISE, which means Positive Resources Available in Student Excellence. This was actually the second name we came up with. We had first come up with Positive Utilization of Kids in Educational Strategies, so we were going to call ourselves the PUKES. But we felt that if we told the kids we were going to have a PUKE meeting, we really would not be telling them much. So we came up with PRAISE, Positive Resources Available in Student Excellence.

This is both a plan of action and a philosophy that is ingrained in our school system. When we talk to parents, to students and to teachers, we say to them, "PRAISE means just that--Positive Resources. What are these resources? Well, they are you as the parents; they are you as the students; they are you as the teachers. All of you are positive resources for achieving this end."

So it is not that we raise our flag in the school and say, "Okay, this is specifically dealing with drugs and alcohol." It is not that at all. We are not only working on the drug and alcohol issue but also on student discipline. We are working with such things

as teenage pregnancies, suicide, and feeling good about yourself--developing a positive self- concept. All of these things are involved.

Involving Others

I am often asked about getting people involved. "How do you get the parents involved in your school system?" "How do you get people in, how do you get them to come to your meetings?" This is very interesting because many of the people contacted us, the administration in the school system, and said that they supported what we were doing. But that may not work in your school district. Here is something else. If you want to get somebody's attention just use the word "sex." We did. We said, "We're going to have a teenage pregnancy workshop, and we want you to come because we are going to give it to the kids the next day." People came. Now people right away said, "Larry, you must really have had a problem with teenage pregnancies in your school district." We did not have the problem; we wanted to get the people involved.

We also involved the clergy. We needed their input because they can tell us a lot and they reach a great number of people. So we got them involved, and we also asked students to attend. We had a high attendance and a lot of people came to that particular session. We surveyed them and said, "Okay, where do you want us to go from here?"

Positive Change

We also worked with the teaching staff, and we found out from them that many times we administrators would ask, "What is wrong with the school district? Can you tell us so we can fix it?" Now, we do need to know the answers to questions like that, but by asking the teachers we learned that we need a more positive approach. So we worked up a little exercise with the staff. As the staff walked in, we divided them up so they would not be with their buddies. We also numbered the tables they went to. Then we said to them, "For the next few minutes we would like you to write down the things that are positive about this school district." We put the answers on newsprint, taped it

up on the wall, and then gave everybody an opportunity to walk around and look at what was positive about the Sandy Creek Schools.

Next, rather than ask them, "What's wrong with the Sandy Creek Schools?," we asked them, "What could we do to make the Sandy Creek Schools a more positive environment?" Interestingly enough, the same thing took place. They wrote it down, then the answers were put up on the wall. Teachers shared this with each other. Then the PRAISE team, a committee made up of teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and community members, prioritized those suggestions. We took a look at them and we implemented many of the things that were suggested by the teachers.

Many of those changes are things we are now very proud of in the Sandy Creek Schools. We have a lot of accomplishments. We have established goals, and from those goals we have developed written objectives. To achieve those objectives, we have trusted in and empowered people so that we are now working together toward a common goal.

I think we have a very good program. It is a way of involving the community. So I guess the best advice that I can leave you with today is, "Don't spit in the frosting bowl, share it. It's good."

PART FOUR

DISCUSSION GROUP FACILITATORS' REPORTS

Following a working lunch, during which the participants viewed a video on the student as worker produced by the Coalition of Essential Schools, the participants broke into nine small discussion groups. The discussion groups were asked to explore school restructuring based on the morning's presentations. Specifically, the groups were: (1) asked to brainstorm on the barriers that might exist to restructuring education; and (2) asked what they would recommend to various groups -- legislators, school administrators, school boards, teachers, state department of education officials, educational service units, colleges and universities, the state board of education, parents, and others -- to further the consideration of school restructuring in Nebraska.

After the discussions, the small groups reassembled. Reports from each group's facilitator follows:

Bill Callahan:

We came up with three recommendations. The first is that all of the participants in the education sector must learn to cooperate and to actively, not passively, participate. The second is that there should be active inservice for all of the participants in education. Third, and finally, we should create a long-term plan that includes a proactive mission statement for education.

Dan Kamas:

One of the things that most impressed us is the spirit of cooperation that we saw being fostered today among very diverse groups. We believe that this spirit needs to be maintained so that we have some continuity when we all get back home. We also thought it was very important for schools to work hard to reach a consensus on what their goals are and what kind of product they want to produce. It is also important to

provide school districts with opportunities to have flexibility in how they accomplish those goals.

Milan Wall:

Our group had a really good discussion about the atmosphere surrounding restructuring, and we concluded that the atmosphere is positive. The focus of discussion was not on the barriers but on what we should do next.

First, there was an understanding that a great deal of what we call restructuring is already going on in Nebraska. So what we should do is encourage restructuring to continue to move forward, not to suggest that it has to start.

The second point concerned the process of change and who should be involved. That discussion had three major themes. The first is that we need to involve as many constituencies as possible in a cooperative effort. We had a lot of discussion about the need to communicate with and to involve the public, parents, and other community members, as well as all those constituencies within the school and other constituencies of educators outside of local schools. A second theme that ran through the conversation had to do with the recognition that if change is going to happen, the locus of that change needs to be in the classroom with the classroom teacher. The other constituencies need to be aware that they have the responsibility to create an environment and atmosphere in which teachers feel supported as they make changes at the classroom level. The third major theme has to do with the role of the Legislature. The Legislature should see itself as having the responsibility to provide leadership and resource support. Resource support does not always mean cash, although there may be a role for financial incentives. But those are not the only kinds of incentives that we might look at as coming from the state policy level. The Legislature needs to look at its role broadly and ambitiously in this respect.

Miles Bryant:

We talked about a lot of different things. We felt that the first problem was providing incentives, not just from the Legislature but from each level of the system. Policymakers need to provide incentives and so do administrators. Classroom teachers need to provide them for students to work at the kinds of changes that were described in the morning session.

We also thought that boards, teachers, administrators, and, where appropriate, the parents and the community constituency need to be involved in developing a vision of what restructuring means within that local school setting. We thought that the next thing that probably has to happen is that the vision needs to be shared with state policy makers, with the Legislature, and with the Department of Education.

Teachers need to have time. Our group decided that teachers should not be expected to subsidize this initiative economically. In other words, it should not be an add-on to their day. Somehow the system needs to accommodate this effort in a way that does not require teachers to spend more of their day, so that this is not a punitive thing for teachers. We also talked about public perception. Public perception is a problem, and any kind of change in the Nebraska setting needs to be attuned to that fact.

Finally, we felt leadership needs to emerge in some fashion to move any kind of initiative onward. We also mentioned that the different groups in the state need to come together. Education groups need to coalesce and to provide leadership.

Bob Beecham:

The discussion we had was very enthusiastic and very stimulating. We concluded that there has got to be an environment for a change, that the Legislature and school boards need to create that environment for change, and that as part of that environment we need to have some commonly shared goals by the year 2000. We talked about the year 2000 and beyond as the period we ought to be looking toward. An interesting comment made was that developing those shared goals would require adopting a

shared definition of what we think is an educated person. It became clear as we were talking that there probably is some disagreement on the definition of "an educated person."

One of the superintendents commented that we ought to recognize some of the efforts of restructuring that are already going on, and suggested that by supporting those efforts through some kind of incentive funding the Legislature ought to create some models for other districts to look at.

Robin Kimbrough:

First of all, my group believes that as we think about legislators, administrators, school boards, teachers, superintendents, and the different kinds of groups that we were dealing with, we all need to be working together as a team. Often we all have a common interest, so we need to get together and work together as a team on restructuring.

The second thing that they wanted to tell you was that we need a mission statement and a long-range plan about where we are going. We need to know how to get there. We not only need to dream the dream but also need to have the goals. Our group also thinks that we need an individual who is going to lead this effort, someone who will be on the cutting edge.

Along with the mission and the long-range plan, we need to have funding. Some of that funding needs to be targeted towards change, so we can create an atmosphere for restructuring within the state. We also need to recognize that change is an intensely local process, and that an atmosphere for change needs to be created within all the different groups that we talked about in our small groups today.

There are two final matters. First, we need to consider where we go from here. What will be our next steps? Often when we come to meetings like this nothing happens afterwards. It is critical that as we go away today something positive comes out of this meeting. Second, and finally, we need to broaden the discussion. For

example, we noticed that a number of groups were not represented here today. The group specifically mentioned was businessmen. We need to get them involved and to make them an active part of the restructuring process.

John Clark:

If we had to summarize our discussion in three words, we would say, "Rethink all roles!" Restructuring would require major changes in the means of operation of every constituency that we discussed. We also decided that messages need to be sent to the Legislature, maybe snippets on the Christmas card saying, "Make education a top priority, and add funds other than property taxes!" The one that we want to chisel on the granite of this foundation is, "Less is not more when dollars are an issue!"

Administrators need to build new skills, particularly in the areas of consensus and development. School boards need to make a commitment and show leadership, particularly on professional growth of the staff. Teachers must buy into the change. The Department of Education should provide leadership through technical assistance, by being a catalyst, and by funneling the vast amount of good information that is available into a form usable for the state. The State Board of Education should assess the relative merits of two different approaches, namely regulation and encouragement, when new rules and regulations are considered. Educational Service Units need to be the delivery system for staff development and technical assistance. Higher education also has to be restructured.

The news media was highlighted in terms of massive amount of information and knowledge which needs to be imparted to the general public. This is not just a single editorial feature or one-page highlight in an otherwise un-newsworthy week. Students were also mentioned. The point was made that as changes occur, students should help to define that change by giving us feedback. Most of all, as the design evolves and as we reach agreement, we need to make a point of explaining to the students how their educational life is changing.

Finally, business and industry took a very prominent role early on in defining the need for a restructuring. But merely being partners with business may not be sufficient. We need to work with our business and industrial leaders so that they are very firm supporters of this entire process.

Larry Scherer:

I think it is fair to say that in our group there was no sense of complacency about the condition of education in Nebraska. There were a lot of good questions and some good thoughts. We reached a consensus on four major points.

The first was to continue to pursue the dialogue process, broadening out to involve more groups in developing a more widely shared vision about restructuring and the roles and goals of education. Second, there was very strong agreement that there need to be financial incentives for pilot projects in the state. Engaging in some projects would help develop interest and it would also help develop a shared vision. Third, the Legislature should help create an environment for change, one conducive to restructuring. It was noted that this is something of a new role for the Legislature, which tends to be product-oriented not process-oriented. Fourth, there were strong comments, especially from some of the board members, that there needs to be some measure of results. We had absolutely no consensus on the type of accountability system which should be used, but there were a lot of good ideas considered.

Tim Kemper:

All of the people who in some way govern the allocation of resources need to devote funding and time to these types of innovative activities. That would, obviously, include the Legislature. It would also include the State Department of Education to the extent that it administers grants. Local school boards are included because they allocate local resources to schools and to administrators. This goes right down to the teams and the prinicipals in the individual buildings allocating resources to accomplish the kinds of activities that we all discussed today.

There needs to be a strategic plan, some common goal that everyone is working toward over a long period of time. Our group stressed that this is not a short-term activity. This requires a commitment from all levels. We also discussed the pitfalls of not having that kind of goal- directiveness.

A third item that we discussed was the need for a team approach to decision-making. Although central to the notion of restructuring, we carried that theme beyond just the team in the school or even the team in the district. We considered a team of all the people from the Legislature on down -- or on up, depending upon how you look at it -- who need to work together to accomplish these goals.

We saw a screaming need for openness to change at ail of these levels. Something like restructuring cannot happen without a fundamental change in attitudes and a fundamental change in the way we do things. Finally, the Legislature is encouraged to pass enabling legislation.

The statement that probably best summarizes our discussion is that we need a broad-based coalition which is representative of all levels. We need that broad-based coalition to provide the leadership needed for restructuring.

PART FIVE

NATIONAL EXPERTS' REVIEW AND WRAP-UP

SOME TENSION AND PITFALLS

By

Michael Cohen

During the small group sessions I started out using a strategy that turned out to be one of maximizing ignorance. I floated from group to group trying to get a sense of what each was talking about. Doing this reminded me of what happens when my wife and I watch TV together and she has her hands on the remote control. I manage to miss about 10 shows at once. So I think I learned from these discussions just enough to be dangerous.

Let me start by applauding and commending all of you and what started here. You have been very willing to wrestle with some extremely difficult issues in a very thoughtful manner. There are already some very exciting changes going on in this state. As I listened to the groups' reports, it seemed to me that just about every issue that I have ever thought about in connection with restructuring surfaced and was discussed at some point today. I usually do not have this reaction.

Today really has been somewhat unusual for me in another respect. Usually some group is rather skeptical or critical about this subject. So I think what happened here today is rather unique and I think it is a very positive start. But it also made me a little uncomfortable because I grew up in New York City, and it is very hard coming from that background to spend an entire day with such a large group of people all being positive for so long a time. So I began to feel uncomfortable, and in part what I want to do is share with you some of the discomfort and some of the tensions that I sensed as the

discussion went on today. But keep in mind that this is within the context of a very positive discussion.

I should also tell you I come to this with a decidedly political set of lenses. It is hard to work for the governors for any period of time without beginning to think in more political terms than those of us in education are used to. I think you will see that coming through in my remarks.

Sending the Right Signal

To show you one tension that I noticed, I will start by noting several comments I heard at various times from various groups, and then I will examine what happens when they are put together.

There was a recognition that you are confronted with a sense of complacency in the public. There is not a great outpouring of demand for education improvement in Nebraska. By and large people are saying, "Things look pretty good; we're pretty content with the way things are." Similarly, in one of the groups there was a recognition that educators may not rush to embrace the idea of restructuring, partly because doing so may mean that they have to admit that what they are currently doing is wrong and does not work.

Related to that, another theme that came up a number of times is the need for additional resources. Getting more money from the Legislature came up over and over again. You probably also heard the related message that basically said, "Give us more money, but fewer strings. Narrow the priorities, cut back on the mandates, give us the money, but don't tell us how to spend it." Furthermore, one could detect a restrained enthusiasm, if I might put it that way, for new forms of accountability.

So here is a message someone might get by putting these pieces together: "Things are basically okay, but please give us some more money. We are not going to do anything more or different with it, and in any event, if we do, you will never find out because we do not have the mechanism in place to tell you." And the problem is that

there is not a state in the country where that message has sold in the political arena, and I doubt it would sell very well in Nebraska.

So you need to think very carefully about the message that you might be giving to the public and to the political community. What you are really asking from them and offering in return seems to be rather different from that first message. You really mean to say the following: "Everything is not okay with education in Nebraska, and if we don't make some changes we are robbing our children's future. The system can respond to that. We can make better use of the money that we already have, but we also need some more money to make some even better changes. Here is what those changes will look like, and here are the kinds of results you can expect in return over the long run." Now my bet is that if you had a message along those lines, you would meet with a more receptive public and a more receptive Legislature than you would with the former message.

A few related points come from what we have been learning in states and districts that are already engaged in restructuring. One thing you learn is that there is absolutely nothing neat and orderly about restructuring; it is about as messy as you can imagine. In states, districts, and schools that are trying this, they quickly discover that on the one hand everything they try to change is connected to just about everything else, and on the other hand that you cannot possibly manage changing all of those things simultaneously. So you have to begin to move slowly and thoughtfully and deliberately. The other thing that becomes clear is that outside support, and in some cases pressure, is critical. The impetus for change cannot come only from within the education system; it must come from outside as well. But this creates another dilemma for you, because once you get outside groups interested in change, they will not have nearly the patience that you need to require of them if you are to manage a long-term process of change.

Communication and Accountability

Another tension arises from these last two points. I put this on the table before, but I want to reinforce it. Balancing the need for slow, deliberate, comprehensive change on the one hand, and on the other hand the sense of urgency and the lack of patience that the public will bring to this, just pushes the issue of accountability to the forefront once again. So you need to find ways to communicate to the public what you are trying to do, how you are going about it, what the difficulties are and how you are acting to overcome them. Without an accountability mechanism that deals with those issues, I think your ability to build the kind of public support that you want will be limited.

I have just a few other observations. Lots of groups listed barriers to restructuring. I do not think I would disagree with any of them. One of the things that we have seen from some of the schools and districts that were involved early in restructuring is that, at least in the short run, barriers internal to the system turn out to be more problematic than barriers external to the system. There are about five or six states that have basically said to schools, "Come up with a restructuring plan. If you need waivers from laws, rules and regulations, we'll give them to you." But there are not many waiver requests coming forward at this very early stage of the game, and people in the system are recognizing that they do not have very many good models, ideas, or conceptions of what other ways of doing business would be like. After all, when you have been working in the system for as long as many of us have, you get comfortable with the status quo. It turns out to be pretty difficult to all of a sudden come up with brand new ideas about how to organize education. So people need a lot of help and a lot of support of the kind the Coalition is providing to get through these initial hurdles and barriers.

Remembering the Goal: Education for the 21st Century

Finally, goals are very important. People talked about the need for a long range plan, for visions, and for goals. At some point you need to make sure that this process is being driven by a vision of what students need to know and be able to do in order to succeed in the 21st century. So you have to be looking towards the future, and it is critical to get the public and the business community, as well as the education community, involved in setting those goals. You also need to devise ways of assessing your progress towards reaching those goals. If you do not do that, we will not get the important and hard work done on what an educated person of the 21st century must be. Talk about this will just be a fad that will come and pretty quickly go. Public support will quickly erode. All of you will spend lots of time talking about restructuring in terms of managing the change process, dealing with conflict, getting people involved, and so on and so forth. But you will lose sight of the reason why you are doing it at all, and that has to do with the kinds of students that you want to be helping to produce over the course of the next 10 or 20 years.

FOUR POINTS TO REMEMBER

By

Dr. Robert McCarthy

I would like you to consider the images of this conference and of the conversations you have had as they relate to the images you have of your school, of the people in your school, of your faculty and your school board, and of the kids that you might want to meet there. Focus on what restructuring has to do with the kids in your school and how it will make life better for them. As you think about that when you get back to your school, walk around, take a look in the classrooms, and see if the kinds of engagement and activities that should occur in a restructured school are happening in your school. If one of the things that happens as a result of your conversations here today is that you put on a new set of lenses when you look at your school, then a large portion of the day will be worth it.

The second thing I would like to suggest to you is that the people who are very much at risk in this endeavor are principals. Principals need support. They need encouragement and an opportunity to talk about their conflicting roles as they are beginning to emerge. For example, in most of your communities, the definition of a strong leader in the school is in direct opposition to the concept of sharing authority and decision-making. From the point of view of many communities, a principal who is a strong leader more closely resembles a Stalin than a Socrates leading the faculty in an enlightened discussion of pedagogical issues.

So questions about leadership in your schools cannot and should not be ignored when the conversation about restructuring begins. What happens when they are ignored is that principals tend to retreat and to protect themselves against restructuring efforts. This must be avoided, for if there is one thing we found out in the four or five

years of involvement in the Coalition schools, it is that the principal's active, sensitive, and sophisticated support is absolutely crucial.

What is happening now is that the world of the principal is being turned upside down. In traditional terms, strong leadership is viewed as weak leadership, and weak leadership is viewed as strong leadership. I refer you here to a chapter in Sarah Long Lightfoot's book, The Good High School.

Another point, the third I want to stress, is not to lose sight of the fact that one of the intents of developing thoughtful students is decency, and that schools that have thoughtful students and thoughtful faculty members are decent places. They are populated with people who think before they act. So one of the reasons for providing opportunities for teachers to be reflective and teachers and students to be good thinkers is that the school becomes a more decent place. This is a very important point to keep in mind, because it transforms the school, not just the classroom, into a place where people treat each other with respect.

Finally, fourth, do not kid yourselves about what restructuring is and what it is not. Tinkering around and playing with new programs and new activities without examining the fundamental use of time and resources in your schools might result in good programs, but it is not restructuring the education endeavor. I would suggest that as a group, as a state, you have some kind of a general agreement about what exactly a restructured school is, what exactly are the aims of a restructured school, and what exactly a restructured school would look like both in structure and in the pedagogy which takes place in its classrooms.

SIX STAGES IN THE RESTRUCTURING PROCESS

By

Dr. Beverly Anderson

I want to focus a bit more attention on the notion of the stages of change. I want to walk through about six stages that usually occur as people go through changes. Based on the discussions today, it seems that we are in some of the early stages here.

The Six Stages

First of all, one of the things that happens is people are testing to find out if other people are serious. This is the testing stage, and I saw a lot of that going on today. The second stage is that of exhilaration. We start to see all the possibilities. I also saw that going on here today. Now, unfortunately, the third stage after that is deflation. All of a sudden you realize, "Wait a minute, not everybody is on board here, and this is a lot tougher than I realized." The administrator's axiom comes into play, "If anything can go wrong, it will do so in triplicate." You really get a sense of despair at this point, and a lot of people drop out. I think this is the stage we need to keep watching for because this is the tough one to pull through. This is the one that will make the difference between really getting down to some fundamental change or simply skimming the surface.

What we are trying to get to is the fourth stage, where we get a sense of renewed commitment. There is a real transition there which we have to go through. Here people say, "Hey, this comes from the heart," and we decide we really are going to get into it and make a real personal commitment. One of the things that tends to pull people into and through that stage is seeing the small rewards which come when they focus on a few things and get them going well. After this stage, where a few changes are in place and going well, you are able to move into the next stage. In this fifth stage there is a sense of coherence. Things are starting to pull together at a deeper and more

fundamental level. Finally, we get into the sixth stage, which can be called steady self-renewal. We recognize that this is going to be an ongoing process. After all, we are looking for an education system that is built for a society of change, not one for a stagnant society. Continual thinking, renewal, and adjusting as we go become the norm.

I think a good analogy to keep in mind is a tugboat trying to turn the Queen Elizabeth. When you first get into the tugboat, you are trying to figure out if it can do this massive task. Then you start to see that it can be done. But then you get to the stage where you think you are in a rowboat instead of a tugboat. Once you get beyond that and the tugboats are all pulling in the same direction, you start to get the sense that you are really moving and that this is a steady and long but possible process. So I encourage you to keep working through those stages.

Rethinking Change

I have one final comment. It is becoming more and more evident as we go along that something very fundamental is happening in our society in terms of how change occurs. I think most of us have grown up in an era of a stimulus-response way of thinking about change. Someone tells someone else what to do, they will just respond, and we can control that. But now there is a fundamental shift in society. We are coming to realize that if we are going to have significant change it must come from within people. There is a fundamental belief, a commitment, an understanding, and an excitement about where we are going. So I encourage all of you to keep moving forward. It has been exciting to be with you and to see the efforts of your undertaking.

PART SIX - CLOSING REMARKS

TAKING THE MESSAGE BACK HOME

By

Senator Ron Withem

I have a few closing observations from the perspective of someone who has worked with education groups in Nebraska on a number of different occasions during six years in the Legislature. First, groups usually go immediately to phase three, the phase of despair, hand wringing, and "Gosh, we can't change anything." So the fact that we have not skipped steps one and two today is very positive. Honestly, I have never been involved with an educational committee hearing, educational problem, conference, or whatever it has been that has not ultimately devolved into a rather negative outlook. It has always been something like, "We have all of these problems; we need all this money; the problems are so massive that we are just not able to deal with them." This is the first time that I have left a conference with what I feel is a very upbeat attitude, a can-do attitude, feeling that maybe we really can bring about some changes, feeling that it is possible for us to grab hold of all the problems that we have in Nebraska education and bring about some changes.

Second, it is the first time that I have seen a cross-section of the Nebraska education community come together and spend a day where we have not ended up focusing on the traditional issues that have tended to divide us. Frankly, I expected some of these groups to get up here and say, "All of these things are nice, but the most important thing we need to do is reorganize schools in our state," or, "The most important thing we need to do is quit sending all that money out to rural Nebraska," or, "We need to quit sending all that money into urban Nebraska." These kinds of issues need to continue to be addressed, but I am very pleased to see that today we went

beyond them and talked about more fundamental issues concerning what is happening to the kids in the classroom.

So for those two reasons, if nothing else, it has been an incredibly positive day. The next thing I want to comment on is where we go from here. It is very important that a couple of days from now you pause and remember the feeling of exhilaration that existed here today. After all, I know what will probably happen. You are going to get in your cars and drive back to Rising City, to Fremont, to Chadron, to Ogallala, and to those other places, and hopefully you are going to feel pretty positive about today. And if you are a teacher, for example, you are going to go into the teachers' lounge tomorrow and say, "I went to the most exciting meeting on restructuring yesterday." But other people will say, "Yeah, I went Christmas shopping, and let me tell you those crowds are terrible. And isn't it rude the way this football play-off system is working; we still don't know for sure whether the Vikings are going to be in the playoffs or not." So you will tend to get pulled back into the day-to-day system, but you must not let that happen.

I think that having teams come today was an important attempt to prevent that from happening. You should have a support group back there, so you are going to be able to rely on each other and to continue to carry this message back into your local community. Remember, it is not going to work, nothing will happen, if that message does not go back home with you.

It is also very important that we follow up on our work here today. As members of the State School Board Association we need to follow up. As members of the State Board of Education we need to have follow-up involvement. We as a Legislature need to follow up. Where exactly we go as a Legislature I do not yet know; I need more input from you folks, more planning sessions. But we will keep this process going during the next legislative session, even if it is just a formalization of the process mentioned in the staff research report, a formalization of the Talking With Educators process. I would also

like to propose some model legislation to fund or to reward some model programs in our state. We will be following up and continuing through with this at the state level.

Thank you.

FEATURED FACULTY

The following persons were featured as presenters at the Nebraska Symposium on School Restructuring sponsored by the Legislature's Education Committee. Their remarks are contained herein.

Mr. Michael Cohen, Associate Director of Education Programs for the National Governors' Association.

Most recently Mr. Cohen has authored a booklet, Restructuring the Education System: Agenda for the 1990s. He has a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Binghampton and he has completed most of the requirements for a doctorate at Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Robert McCarthy, Director of Schools for the Coalition of Essential Schools

Dr. McCarthy is a former history teacher and high school principal who received a master's degree in European history from the University of Massachusetts and a doctorate from the Harvard School of Education.

Dr. Beverly Anderson, Associate Executive Director of the Education Commission of the States

Dr. Anderson's published work focuses on testing, assessment, evaluations, school improvement, and policy development.

Dr. James Merritt, Superintendent, Norfolk Public Schools

Sandy Seckel, Teacher, Columbus Public Schools

Father James E. Gilg, Principal, Father Flanagan High School

Jan Herbek, Teacher, Doniphan Elementary School

Gail Thompson, Principal, Doniphan Elementary School

Larry Ramaekers, Superintendent, Sandy Creek School District

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  Heartland Center
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- Joe E. Lutjeharms
  Commissioner of Education
  68509
- Mary Mancuso
  O'Hara & Associates, Inc.
  68508
- Ann Masters
  Department of Education
  68509
- Senator Jim McFarland
  Nebraska Legislature
  68509
- Sharon Meyer
  Approval and Accreditation
  68509
- Senator Jerry Miller
  Nebraska Legislature
  68509
- Cynthia H. Milligan
  Dept. of Banking & Finance
  68509
- Senator Scott Moore
  Nebraska Legislature
  68509
- Damon Munroe
  Legislative Research Division
  68509
- Senator Arlene Nelson
  Nebraska Legislature
  68509

- Don Ostdiek
  Senator Jackie Smith
  68509
- Robert Peterson
  NASB
  68508
- Jim Rea
  NE State Ed. Assn.
  68508
- June Remington
  NCSA
  68508
- Marilyn L Scheffler
  Special Education
  68583
- Larry J. Scherer
  Education Committee
  68509
- DiAnna R. Schimek
  Nebraska Legislature
  68512
- Phil Schoo
  Lincoln Public Schools
  68801
- Senator Sandy Scofield
  Nebraska Legislature
  68509
- Dale Siefkes
  NASB
  68508
- Senator Jacklyn J. Smith
  Nebraska Legislature
  68509
- Linda Soto
  Legislative Research Division
  68509
- Deb Thomas
  Senator Vard Johnson
  68509
- Arlyn Uhrmacher
  Lincoln Public Schools
  68502
- Karen VanLaningham
  Legislative Research
  68509
- Larry R. Vontz
  Department of Education
  68509
- Milan Wall
  Heartland Center
  68508
- Lorraine Walsh
  Lincoln Education Assn.
  68504
- Senator Ron Withem
  Education Committee
  68509
- LaRue Wunderlich
  Education Committee
  68509
- RuthAnn Wylie
  Lincoln Public Schools
  68502
- Melissa Wythers Folsom
  Senator Lowell Johnson
  68509

Litchfield

- Thelma Lang
  State Board of Education
  68852

Milford

- Larry D. Bonner
  ESU #6
  68405
- Dr. Larry M. Lindquist
  Educational Service Unit #6
  68405
- Tom Stone
  Educational Service Unit #6
  68405

Millard

- Dr. Don Stroh
  Millard Public Schools
  68154

Minden

- Charles Featherston
  Minden Public Schools
  68959
- Doug Kristensen
  Nebraska Legislature
  68949
- Dr. Richard Raecke
  Minden Public Schools
  68959

Nelson

- Oscar Mussman
  Nelson Public Schools
  68961
- Paul D. Statz
  Nelson Public Schools
  68961

Norfolk

- Vern Doran
  Norfolk Public Schools
  68701
- Tim Goede
  Norfolk Public Schools
  68701
- Jule Horst
  Norfolk Public Schools
  68701
- Jan Lindsay
  2201 Madison Avenue
  68701
- Dr. James G. Merritt
  Norfolk Public Schools
  68701
- Sue Volkman
  Norfolk Public Schools
  68701

Ogallala

- Dr. John Brennan
  Ogallala Public Schools
  69153
- Carol Haight
  ESU # 16
  69153
- Ken Wilcox
  ESU # 16
  69153

Omaha

- Vickie Anderson
  Omaha Public Schools
  68106
- Theresa Barron-McKeagney
  Chicano Awareness Inc.
  68107
- Rachel Billmeyer
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Ken Bird
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Karen Burmood
  Lewis and Clark Junior High
  68132
- Ronald Burmood
  Omaha Public Schools
  68131
- Bill Callahan
  Kayser Hall 334
  68518
- Jacquie Criger
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Deborah Duggan
  5617 Emile Street
  68106
- Catherine Eichorn
  Lewis & Clark Jun. High
  68132
- Lynn Elwood
  Kiewit-Millard Public Schools
  68154
- Jacquie Estee
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Linda S. Esterling
  Omaha Public Schools5313 Howar
  68106
- Lee Ann Flick
  ESU #3
  68137
- Pat Geary
  ESU #3
  68137
- Father James E. Gilg
  Father Flanagan High School
  68010
- Carla Gilliland
  Omaha Public Schools
  68131
- Ann Grill
  Lewis & Clark
  68132
- Cindy Hamm
  Millard Public Schools
  68154

- Antonietta Hernandez
  Chicano Awareness Inc.
  68107
- Ramon Hernandez
  Chicano Awareness Inc.
  68107
- Joe Higgins
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Frank Hoy
  Benson High School
  68104
- John E. Jensen
  Omaha Public Schools
  68132
- Rod Johnson
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Helen Kelley
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Dr. Robert C. Kellogg
  Assistant Commissioner of Ed.
  68104
- Angie Kilby
  Omaha Public Schools
  68134
- Mrs. Sharon Krueger
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Ofelia Lara
  Chicano Awareness Inc.
  68107
- C Victor Larson
  Omaha Public Schools
  68144
- Kathleen Laughlin
  Millard Public Schools
  68154
- Steve Luna
  US West, Inc.
  68124
- Paul J. Malcom
  Omaha Public Schools
  68114
- James L. McDowell
  ESU #3
  68137
- Dan Meyer
  ESU #3
  68137
- Terry Monaghan
  Lewis and Clark
  68132
- Patricia A. O'Connell
  Department of Education Adm.
  68134
- Floyd E. Olson
  Millard Public Schools
  68144
- Dr. Rich Pahls
  Hollings Heights-Millard
  68154
- William C. Ramsey
  State Board of Education
  68132
- Stan Sibley
  Omaha Public Schools
  68144
- Steve Skinner
  Millard Public Schools
  68154
- Deb Suttle
  Omaha Public Schools
  68134
- Dr. Jim Tangdall
  Westside Community Schools
  68114
- Michael Tucker
  Millard Public Schools
  68118
- Mary Vasquez
  Chicano Awareness Inc.
  68107
- Carol Wakin
  Lewis & Clark
  68132

Palmyra

- Gary Fritch
  Palmyra Public Schools
  68418
- Wayne Johnson
  Palmyra Public Schools
  68418

- Jo Thomas
  Palmyra Public Schools
  68418

Plainview

- Don Blecha
  Plainview Public Schools
  68769
- Deb Jensen
  Plainview Public Schools
  68769
- Robert Mayer
  Plainview Public Schools
  68769
- Gale Retzlaff
  Plainview Public Schools
  68769
- Judy Steinkraus
  Plainview Public Schools
  68769

Plattsmouth

- Dr. Margaret E. Fitch
  Omaha Public Schools
  68048

Providence

- Dr. Robert McCarthy
  Coalition of Essential Schools
  02912

Ralston

- Cheryl Blue
  Ralston Public Schools
  68127
- Janice Branch
  Ralston Public Schools
  68127
- Dr. Gary Carlson
  Ralston Public Schools
  68127
- Dr. Marlin Nelson
  Ralston Public Schools
  68127
- Rose Peterson
  Ralston Public Schools
  68127
- Dr. Ken Rippe
  Ralston Public Schools
  68127

Raymond

- Don Fritz
  Raymond Central Public Schools
  68428
- Kristine Wolzen
  Raymond Central Public Schools
  68428

Rising City

- Dr. James P. Havelka
  Rising City Public Schools
  68658

Scottsbluff

- Creda Thompson
  ESU # 13
  69361

Sidney

- Marge Curtiss
  ESU #14
  69162

Springfield

- Dr. Robert G. Diekmann
  South Sarpy # 46
  68059

Sutherland

- Michael Cunning
  Sutherland Public School #55
  69165

Sutton

- Delary Hofmann
  Sutton Public Schools
  68979
- Dennis Isernhagen
  Sutton Elementary School
  68979
- Jan McKenzie
  Sutton Public Schools
  68979
- Ronald R. Wall
  Sutton Public Schools
  68979

Trenton

- Roberta Loesher
  ESU #15
  69044

Wahoo

- Kent B. Mann
  Wahoo Public Schools
  68066

Washington

- Michael Cohen
  National Governors' Assn.
  20001

Wauneta

- Ken Smith
  Wauneta Public Schools
  69045

- Dennis Wentz
  Wauneta Public Schools
  69045

Wood River

- Eldon (Dean) Stewart
  Wood River Rural High School
  68883

York

- Dale Adams
  York Public Schools
  68467

- Scott T. Koch
  York High School
  68467